

No 445

APR. 10TH 1914

FAME
AND

5 Cents

FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

The Secret Chart

OR THE GOLDEN TREASURE OF THE CRATER
AND OTHER STORIES

By A Self-Made Man



The fumes of the gas ascended from the crater and were breathed by Jim. He uttered a cry as he felt his senses leaving him, staggered back, and would have fallen had not Will and the Indians seized his arms.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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NEW YORK, APRIL 10, 1914.

Price 5 Cents.

The Secret Chart

OR,

THE GOLDEN TREASURE OF THE CRATER

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

THE MESSAGE FROM THE SEA.

"It's a fine day for a sail," said Jimmy French to his particular friend, Will Larkins, as the pair stood at the head of old Meiggs Wharf, San Francisco, some forty years ago.

"Bet your life it is," replied Will, glancing over the sparkling waters of the bay. "Are you thinking of taking a boat and going out?"

"What do you say about it?"

"I'm with you if you pay the freight. Just at present I'm clean busted."

"You're always busted, Will."

"That isn't my fault. My old man won't give me enough spending money."

"How much do you call enough?"

"I could worry along on four bits a week."

"If we stay out four hours it will cost me a dollar."

"Have you got a dollar?"

"I've got one half, two quarters, and three dimes."

"You're rich," said Will, enviously.

"Oh, I've got more in my trunk."

"Where did you get it all?"

"My uncle was down from Napa the other day. I'm a great favorite with him. He presented me with five shares of Consolidated Virginia, as a nest-egg, he called it."

"Well?"

"The day he went away I took the stock to a broker and sold it for \$6 a share."

"You did! He didn't expect you to do that, did he?"

"No; but I generally do what people don't expect of me," said Jimmy with a grin. "That's why I'm flush. So as you're willing to go with me, we'll take a sailboat. The one we used last Saturday, and which is called the Sea Bird. It's floating down there waiting for somebody to come along and make use of her. Come along. There's old Mitchell, her owner, smoking his pipe and ruminating as usual. A dollar looks as big as a house to him."

The man in question was seated on the landing steps with his legs crossed.

"Hello, pop, want to rent the Sea Bird for the afternoon?" said Jimmy.

"Twenty-five cents an hour, son," said the old shellback, cocking an eye on the lad.

"I know it. Here's a dollar. If we get back under four hours there'll be something coming to me."

"Right you are. Take her along."

The boys got in, hoisted the sail, and put off.

"Where are you going?" asked Will.

"We'll go out to the Heads, if you don't mind."

"Let her rip."

"If teacher heard you say that, there'd be a rip in your pants. She'd send you to the principal, and he'd tickle you nicely with his rattan."

"It wouldn't be the first time," grinned Will.

"I'll bet it wouldn't. What were you doing when I came over to your house?"

"I was making something," said Will, evasively.

"You were up to some funny business. Own up now. I won't tell on you."

"It was a patent plaster I was making out of melted beeswax and other things."

"What were you going to do with it?"

"Put it on teacher's chair. It sticks both ways. When she gets up the chair will go with her."

"And what will happen to you when she learns who did it?"

"She won't learn."

"There'll be a riot in the room."

"Who cares?"

"Not me, for I won't have a hand in it. She'll suspect you, though, for you are always up to some lark."

"Suspicion isn't proof."

"You'll have to lie to save yourself. I don't believe in that. The copybook says he who lies will steal."

"The copybook is a liar. I wouldn't steal for anything."

"Suppose you found a purse in the street with five dollars in it, and you found out who it belonged to, would you keep it?"

"No, but I probably wouldn't find out who it belonged to."

"Would you try to find out?"

"Of course I would."

"That's right. Honesty is the best policy. Say, what's that floating yonder? It looks like a square bottle."

"That's what it is."

"I'll steer for it and you pick it up."

"What for?"

"Because I tell you to. I'm the skipper of this craft."

In a few minutes Will reached over, seized the bottle by the neck and pulled it on board.

"It's a foreign bottle," he said, after looking at the label.

"Hand it over. I see it's corked. Maybe there's something in it."

"If there was it wouldn't float. It's empty."

"There might be a message in it."

"A message!"

"Yes—a message from the sea. You've read about such things, haven't you?"

"Sure I have. There was a paragraph in the Bulletin th

other day about a bottle that had floated across the Atlantic. Somebody living at Nahant, near Boston, picked it up on the beach. There was a message in it from somebody in Ireland."

"I read the story. It was a message from a girl to her fellow, a chap named Hennessy. There was no address given on it. A Boston paper printed it in full. It wound up, 'If you don't get this, let me know, lovingly your sweetheart, Nora.' Pretty good that. I guess it was a hoax, but it came across the ocean all right. I wonder where this bottle came from?"

"China, maybe."

"Or Australia."

"Or the Fiji Islands."

"Get out. The label is Dutch. The bottle held Holland gin."

Jimmy held it up to the sun.

"By George, there is a paper in it."

"Pull out the cork and read it."

"The cork is stuck in."

"Break the bottle, then."

"I guess I'll wait till I get home and pull the cork. It might be a message from a shipwrecked party."

"What will you do if it is?"

"What do you suppose I'll do, you ninny? Turn it over to the Exchange."

"I'd laugh if somebody threw it over from an outgoing vessel to-day and it has just floated back."

"It doesn't take much to make you laugh."

"I wouldn't mind having the laugh on you," chuckled Will.

"You play that trick on teacher, and you won't do much laughing."

In course of an hour the boat reached the outer entrance to the Golden Gate.

"How much farther are you going?" asked Will.

"Half a mile or so."

The sun was setting in a blaze of glory, and Jimmy kept the boat pointed so that the mainsail would shield their eyes.

It looked a bit misty, which ought to have warned the boys that a fog, so prevalent in summer, was forming out at sea.

They had another hint in the dropping of the wind.

'Frisco fogs are very much like great jets of steam, and it doesn't take them long to roll in till the upper bay and northern part of the city is enveloped in a damp curtain as thick as pea soup.

The course Jimmy was steering was taking the boat diagonally out to sea.

She wasn't going very fast now, as the wind had become light.

The tide, however, was beginning to ebb, and that was the worst thing that could have happened to them under the circumstances.

"Turn about and run back, Jimmy," said Will. "The fog will catch us if you don't."

Jimmy took the hint and turned the boat around.

But the wind was gradually failing them.

Only for that fact, fog or no fog, they could have easily sailed back, though they would have found some trouble in fetching Meiggs Wharf.

In an incredibly short time the fog overtook the boat, and blotted out their surroundings.

Ten minutes before they could see clear to the horizon and blink in the sun's face; now the sun could only be distinguished as a glow through the mist, and they could hardly see each other in the boat.

It was still broad daylight, but the light was yellow behind them and gray in front toward the bay.

The sail bellied out some and the boat forged ahead a few yards, then it flapped and hung motionless and the little craft lost headway.

The puffs of wind came less frequently, and then stopped altogether.

The sailboat was becalmed and at the mercy of the tide, which was setting out into the broad Pacific.

The short four-hour sail the lads started upon was destined to turn into a lengthy cruise, full of adventure, with a fortune in perspective.

CHAPTER II.

BECALMED IN A FOG.

"This is a nice fix we're in," grumbled Will, with a shiver, for the mist rolled damp and clammy about the boat and the boys, and gave one a moist and not over pleasant feeling.

"Oh, we'll come out all right," replied Jimmy, whose nature

was optimistic, and he never looked on the dark side of things. "We're only half a mile outside the Heads, and the tide will carry us in."

"How do you know the tide is running in?"

"When we picked the bottle up it was coming in with the tide."

"But that was more than an hour ago."

"Suppose it was. I don't think it has changed yet."

Which showed that Jimmy was ignorant of the real facts.

When they picked the bottle up the tide was practically slack, between ebb and flow, and during the hour and a half which had intervened it had turned to the former, and there would be no change for a matter of five hours.

"Suppose it has changed?" persisted Will, who was disposed to take a gloomy view of their situation, which wasn't strange under the conditions they were up against.

"What's the use of supposing a thing? Anyway, the wind is likely to spring up again, and then we will sail right back."

"How can we find our way in this murk?"

"Easily enough. We are headed east, and the Golden Gate is before us."

"Sure of that, are you?"

"Of course I am. You can see the reflection of the sun behind us."

"But the sun is going down, and when it's out of sight you won't know where you are."

"It won't go down for an hour yet. Anyway, we'll still be headed in the right direction."

"But the tide might turn the boat around."

"I don't think so. As long as it's calm the boat will stay in the same position. I'll hold the rudder just as it is."

"I'm getting a chill. I'm going to crawl under the half-deck and try and keep warm."

"Good idea. I'll tie the tiller, so it won't move, and crawl under with you."

"But one of us ought to stay out here and keep watch."

"What can you see?"

"You can't see anything, but you can hear. An Italian fishing smack, or an incoming ship might run us down in this fog and we would be drowned."

Jimmy admitted that there was a possibility of such a thing, but still he argued that the chances were against such a catastrophe.

He was willing to risk it rather than take a continuous fog bath.

He tied the tiller and the boys crawled under the half-deck, where they felt more comfortable than in the open air, though the fog found its way under the deck, too.

"We were foolish to come out here," said Will.

"Maybe we were, but there is no use of howling over that now."

"We may not get back before morning. Mitchell will charge you two bits an hour for all the time we are out. That will make a hole in your cash."

"Oh, I'll compromise with him. I don't own a Comstock mine."

"My folks will give me thunder for staying out all night."

"Why should they when you couldn't help yourself?"

"My father will say I had no business to put myself in such a predicament."

"Blame it on me."

"That won't do any good."

"I'll call at your house and square things for you."

"If we're out all night we'll lose our supper."

"Then we'll have twice the appetite for breakfast," chuckled Jimmy.

"But I don't want to go hungry all night."

"I know, but it will be a new sensation for you."

"Say, you seem to take things mighty easy. Do you like being out here in a fog, with the prospect of staying all night?"

"No, I don't like it any better than you do; but will growling over the matter get us back any quicker?"

"I don't know that it will. Still it's pretty hard to be cheerful when you feel down in the mouth."

"I don't often feel down in the mouth. I find it makes a fellow feel better by taking things as they come and making the most of them."

"I wish I could look on things as you do, but I can't."

Thus time passed, the sun went down and darkness fell upon the sea, turning the fog into a dark, pulsating mass.

Not a sound broke the stillness that reigned around the boat, now more than a mile outside the Heads.

The boys had no idea that they were drifting steadily out on the Pacific.

The mere suspicion of such a thing would have given Will a fit.

Jimmy tried to cheer his companion up by talking on subjects that he thought would interest him.

This went well enough until a sense of hunger started Will growling again.

"What time do you suppose it is?" he said at last.

"Haven't the least idea," replied Jimmy.

"I wonder how things are outside?"

"About the same."

"If the wind had started up we'd know it, wouldn't we?"

"Sure. We'd feel the boat moving. She hasn't moved since before we came in here."

"I wish the wind would start up. I'm getting awfully hungry."

"Get out and whistle for it."

"What good would that do?"

"I don't know that it would do any good."

"Then why do you tell me to do it?"

"Because I've read about sailors whistling for wind in a calm."

"Did the wind come?"

"I don't recall that it did. Sailors are curious sort of chaps. They believe in things that few other people take stock in."

"I know. They're awfully superstitious. A sailor told me once that he wouldn't go to sea on a Friday for double pay."

"I believe you. You've heard of a bird called the Stormy Petrel, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Sailors call it Mother Cary's chicken. They believe it represents the soul of some seaman lost at sea. If you were at sea and shot one of them, the crew would feel like throwing you overboard. In their opinion it brings bad luck on a ship to injure one of those birds."

"Do you think it does?"

"No. The Stormy Petrel is just a sea bird. It only shows the ridiculous notions sailors carry in their heads."

"If they hear strange noises in the hold or forecastle they think the ship is haunted."

"Sure they do. It was sailors who started the superstition of the Flying Dutchman—the spectral vessel that they claimed haunted the seas off the Cape of Good Hope."

For awhile Will forgot he was so very hungry, but when ten o'clock came around he declared he couldn't hold out until morning.

"What are you talking about?" said Jimmy. "Suppose we were shipwrecked out in the middle of the Pacific, and had nothing to eat, we'd be worse off, wouldn't we?"

"Don't mention it. We'd starve to death."

The boat was several miles west of the Heads by this time, but the outward trend of the tide was nearing its end, and a period of slack water would presently set in.

Then the flood tide would set in, and they would be carried back to the coast two or three miles to the south of the Golden Gate, by which time the fog would probably not be so dense.

At any rate if things had not happened they would have got back to Meiggs Wharf some time during the morning.

But something occurred just then that made a lot of difference in the future movements of the fog-bound lads.

CHAPTER III.

THE DESERTED CRAFT.

"What's that?" ejaculated Will, suddenly.

The boat seemed to be bumping stern on against something in its path.

"That must be a piece of timber that has floated up against us," said Jimmy. "It can't be anything else unless it's a log. I'll go out and see."

He crawled out backward, and when he stood up he saw a great dark object loom up in the fog against which the sailboat had swung.

"Gee! That must be a ship," thought the boy. "She's becalmed like ourselves. Hey, Will, come out—quick!"

Will lost no time in doing so.

He was in half a panic, for he thought something had happened.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"We've floated up against a vessel," said Jimmy. "Look."

Will looked and saw the dark apparition against which they lay.

"We'd better get aboard of her. We'll be safer than in this boat, and we can get something to eat," he said.

Jimmy looked to see how he would tie the sailboat to the vessel.

He finally felt a rope hanging down over the side of the big craft, which was something not shipshape, and he tied the painter of the sailboat to it.

Then grabbing the rope and telling Will to wait till he had asked permission for them both to come aboard, he shinned up to the bulwark, straddled it and dropped on the deck.

The deck being lost in the fog, he could not see anybody.

He listened for the voices of men, but the only sound he heard was the creaking of a rope through a pulley, caused by the slight heave of the vessel on the surface of the ocean.

Not knowing which was forward and which aft, he started to the left on the chance that the cabin lay that way.

It happened that he took the right direction.

As he followed the bulwark he presently came to a short ladder which led up to the poop deck.

The stern railing began at the top of the ladder, ran the length of the cabin, circled the stern, and continued around on the other side to a similar ladder.

Between the rail and the rise of the cabin roof was a passage, duplicated on the other side.

Both passages ended at the open space where the wheel and binnacle stood.

Jimmy mounted the ladder, followed the passage and came out aft.

He knew just where he was, for he had a pretty good knowledge of vessels of all rigs.

He naturally expected to find a sailor standing at the wheel, even though the craft was becalmed, for at sea a man always serves his trick at the wheel during his watch.

Jimmy felt his way to the binnacle, which, with its brass hood as a protection to the compass, stands directly in front of the wheel so that the steersman, who faces forward, can look directly into the opening and see the face of the compass card.

At night the interior of the hood is lighted by a small lamp.

When Jimmy reached the binnacle he saw the outline of the wheel in part.

No one was attending to it.

To make sure, he walked around and saw that the after deck was deserted.

Furthermore, there was no light in the binnacle hood.

Jimmy thought this was strange.

He went to the opening at the head of the companion stairs leading down to the cabin.

All was dark down there, but there was nothing singular in that, for the door below might be closed.

Looking forward along the roof of the cabin, all was dark there, too.

He couldn't make out the skylight, but he did expect to see a glow of light shining through it.

The lamp under the cabin skylight is always kept burning through the night, though turned low, for the benefit of the mates when they turn out at the change of the watch.

"I guess it must be pretty late and everybody has turned in," thought Jimmy, "but there must be a watch on duty forward, and the mate in charge should be here on the poop. I don't see him, though. Maybe he stepped below to get a nip to warm himself. There ought to be a couple of lights somewhere on the stern rail, and one or two forward. Still, lights don't amount to much in a thick fog like this one. I'll have to go down into the cabin and see who I can find there."

Down the stairs he walked, his shoes clicking on the brass-bound steps.

The door below was open and the cabin as dark as pitch.

Jimmy felt in his pocket for a match, for he always carried a supply of that useful article, flashed one and looked around.

The cabin was a scene of confusion.

Clothes were tossed about, mingled with numerous other articles, and things were generally at sixes and sevens.

Lying directly at his feet was a heavy Colt's revolver.

Jimmy picked it up and looked at it.

It was cocked and seemed to be fully loaded.

He laid it on the cabin table on top of a rough pea jacket.

"Things look mighty funny here," thought Jimmy, strange suspicions of foul play beginning to form in his brain. "Something has happened. I wonder if there has been a mutiny? I may find a dead body or two next. I wouldn't be surprised if the vessel is deserted. In that case if Will and I could get her into Frisco harbor we could claim salvage. That would put a bunch of money in our pockets."

Jimmy struck another match.

The door of the captain's cabin stood open. He stepped in and found more confusion there. "That settles it. Something terrible has happened, or things wouldn't be in this shape," he said. With his heart in his mouth, for he fully expected to find one or more dead men in the cabin, he entered each of the other staterooms, the doors of which were likewise open. He saw the same confusion everywhere, but, to his relief, not a corpse. He entered the passage which led to the main deck. He saw two closed doors on either side. The first one had a bunk and lockers, and clothes hung from hooks. Everything was shipshape in it. The room opposite was similar in appearance. The room ahead of it was full of sailcloth and had a carpenter's chest. It showed no particular disturbance. The fourth and last room was the steward's pantry. There were evidences here that the steward had been getting ready to serve a meal in the cabin, and had left things standing around. The door of the passage forward stood wide open, which accounted for both the passage and the cabin being hazy with the fog. The deserted cabin assured Jimmy that the vessel was wholly deserted, and he made no further attempt to find anybody. He made his way to that part of the bulwark where he had come aboard and called down to his companion. "Hello!" replied Will. "You've been a mighty long time talking to the skipper, or whoever you saw. Do I come aboard?" "Shin up," answered Jimmy, laconically. In less than a minute Will's body loomed up beside him. "Jump on deck," said Jimmy, preceding him. Will lost no time in doing so. He was chilled to the bone from standing in the boat waiting for his friend. "If I don't have a cup of coffee, or some hot stuff, I'll have the cold of my life," he said. "Come with me," said Jimmy. He took Will into the cabin passage and closed the door. "It's awfully dark in here," said Will. "Why don't they show a light?" "For a mighty good reason," replied Jimmy. "What reason?" "Don't throw a fit when I tell you." "Why?" asked the astonished Will. "Because there's nobody aboard." "Nobody aboard!" gasped his companion. "That's what I said. The vessel is deserted." "Deserted! Come now, you're joking." "Nary joke. There's been a mutiny, or something of that sort, for the cabin is all endwise. The captain, mates and others who berth aft, have disappeared. Maybe they were thrown overboard, or made to walk the plank. At any rate, they do not appear to have been killed in the cabin. I haven't been forward, but I take it for granted that the crew are gone, too. If there has been trouble between them and the officers, they wouldn't stay in the vessel to face the consequences." "Holy mackerel!" gurgled Will, staring through the darkness at Jimmy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OCCUPANT OF THE FORECASTLE.

"Well, never mind, it isn't our funeral," said Jimmy. "We'll stand aboard till morning, at any rate. There are bunks to burn, so we can have a snooze after we get something to eat." "Is there anything to eat about?" said Will, in a hungry tone. "Bet your life. The pantry is full of food, but there's no hot coffee. If you're chilled you can help yourself to some liquor in the swinging tray under the cabin skylight. It's probably whisky. That will warm your blood." "Never mind. Let's go into the pantry." into the pantry they went. Jimmy lighted the lamp there and they looked around. There was lots of food there. Jars of potted meats and tins of preserved vegetables on the protected shelves.

An opened box of soda crackers on the floor under the steward's working shelf. Half a ham swinging in its canvas jacket from a hook, and two or three more hams which had not been touched. In fact, there was lots of eatables in sight. The boys were satisfied to fall to on a plate of sliced ham cut by the steward, possibly for supper, using crackers to make sandwiches of it. They ate like the hungry lads they were, and cleaned up the ham. "We'll top off with a jar of that marmalade," said Jimmy, taking a jar down and proceeding to open it with his jack-knife. "I'd like a drink," said Will. He spied a red tank attached to one corner of the room and labeled water. He put a cup under the brass cock and turned it. He put the cup to his mouth. "Whew! That's terrible," he said, laying the cup down. The water certainly smelled strong. Jimmy smelled it and agreed that it was no good. "It's been standing too long," he said. "Maybe this vessel has been deserted several days. There's some white wine in that box. Get out a bottle and we'll drink that." A corkscrew hung from a nail, and Will drew the cork. The wine was mild and went very well. They finished their repast, and then Jimmy led the way to the cabin. He lighted the skylight lamp and let his friend gaze around on the state of things. "There's been trouble on board," admitted Will. "Maybe the vessel sprung a leak and was abandoned in a hurry because the skipper thought she was sinking." "Don't believe it," replied Jimmy. "She's high in the water. No danger of her sinking." "I couldn't guess what has happened. Mutinies don't happen often, and I don't think there was one here. The vessel looks to me as if she had been abandoned in a hurry." "We can tell better in the morning when the fog is gone. We are close to the Golden Gate, and if we can sail her into the harbor we will have a claim on the vessel for good money. This cruise of ours might turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to us. It might make us rich." "Do you think so?" said Will. "That would be fine." "Sure it would. Now let's turn in." And turn in they did, and in spite of the novelty of their surroundings they were soon fast asleep. The wind sprang up, an off-shore breeze, shortly afterward, and as the sails of the vessel, which was a small brig, were spread, she bore off to the westward, getting further and further away from the coast of California every hour. It is true she didn't sail as she should have done, because her wheel swung this way and that. The consequence was she would come up and then fall away, very like a drunken man staggering along on the sidewalk. Still she made considerable progress, as the wind freshened with the coming of dawn, and when sunrise lighted up the face of the ocean, now free of the fog left behind, she was clear out of sight of land, and many miles to the south of the Farallones, which are about twenty-five miles west of San Francisco. The boys having gone to sleep late, overslept themselves. It was nine o'clock when Jimmy turned out and dressed himself. The cabin, in spite of its disordered aspect, looked quite cheerful now, for sunshine flashed through the skylight and glistened on the decanter and double row of glasses upon the swinging tray. The tray had been motionless when the boys turned in, but under the swing of the gently rolling brig it had a constant oscillating motion. "The vessel is under way," said Jimmy; "I must hurry up and see where we have got to." He did not stop to awaken Will, but opening the forward cabin door, rushed up to the after or poop deck. He expected to see the Golden Gate close ahead, instead of which he gazed upon a wide expanse of sparkling ocean, not even dotted by a single sail. The water line extended clear to the horizon in every direction. Jimmy was staggered. "Great Scott! what does this mean?" he ejaculated. It meant but one thing—that he and Will were far out at sea. After staring around the horizon in utter bewilderment,

Jimmy rushed down into the cabin and, seizing his companion, nearly pulled him out of his bunk.

"Here, I say, what are you doing? What's up?" protested Will.

"Get up and come on deck," cried Jimmy, excitedly.

"What's on deck? Anybody aboard?"

"You'll see when you get there."

"You look excited. Have you discovered any dead bodies?"

"No. Haven't looked for any."

"Then what's in the wind?" said Will, hustling into his clothes.

"You'll have a fit when you get up where you can see things."

"I will? Tell me what's up. You might as well."

"Tell you nothing. I've just had the surprise of my life, and I'm bound you shall have the same."

"Something's wrong, I'll bet," said Will, getting his jacket. "I'm ready."

"Come on, then."

When they reached the companion stairs, Jimmy stopped.

"Go up first," he said.

"What for?" asked Will, holding back.

"Go on and don't ask questions."

Jimmy's words and action had made Will nervous, and he showed it.

"You go up first," he said.

"No. I want you to see things as I saw them."

"There are a lot of bloody corpses on deck, I know. There's been a mutiny. I don't like to look at dead people, particularly if they're covered with blood."

"There are no corpses. At least I didn't see any. It isn't that at all."

"What is it?"

"Get up and see and don't stand here like a gilly. Get a wiggle on."

Will reluctantly walked up the steps, but he went very slowly.

He was afraid of what he was going to see.

Jimmy followed close behind him.

He finally stepped out on deck and looked around.

He first looked forward, but the rise of the cabin roof prevented him from seeing the main deck.

Then he looked upward and saw that the vessel was under sail.

"We're under sail," he cried. "The crew is aboard."

"No, there isn't a soul aboard that I have seen," said Jimmy.

"Then how did the sails get up? You couldn't have hoisted them."

"They've been up right along. When the brig was abandoned they were left spread."

Then Will gazed around upon the ocean, and he fairly gasped.

"Why, where are we?" he cried, in consternation.

"Out at sea," replied Jimmy.

"How did we get here? What shall we do? We'll never get home again."

Will was all up in the air as Jimmy expected he would be.

"The brig being under sail, she started off as soon as the wind sprang up, and that must have happened during the night. What we are to do I don't know, for we can't work this big craft. She's headed straight out into the Pacific, and we have got to go with her. Our only chance of getting back home is to be picked up by some vessel bound for San Francisco."

"But we can't be far from the coast yet. In what direction does California lie?"

"That way," said Jimmy, pointing.

"How do you know?"

"Because it lies to the east, and there's the sun, which rises in the east."

"What's the matter with working the brig around and running back?"

"You mean by aid of the wheel?"

"Of course."

"This is a square rigger and the yards would have to be braced around before the vessel could be put on a new tack. We can't do that. We have got to let her run. We have no more control over her than we'd have over a runaway horse that had taken the bit in its teeth."

"Oh, my!" groaned Will. "But we've got the sailboat. We can leave this vessel and sail back in that."

"That would be a great risk, for we may be thirty or forty miles out at sea."

Will groaned again.

"What fools we were to come aboard!" he said, gloomily.

"Never mind. We're safe enough as long as the weather holds fair. We won't starve, for there's lots of food in the pantry."

That remark reminded the boys that they were hungry, and Will suggested that they should adjourn to the pantry and get their breakfast.

That suited Jimmy, so they went below and divided a jar of potted meat, which they ate with crackers and washed down with some of the white wine.

And while they ate they talked over the situation.

As usual, Jimmy looked on the bright side, while Will could see nothing but disaster looming up ahead of them.

"Never mind, Will, don't worry over what you can't help. We'll be rescued in a day or two and taken back to 'Frisco, then think what a fine adventure we'll have to tell the boys. They'll all take their hats off to us. The newspapers are bound to get our story, and our names will appear in print. Think of that, old man! The mayor of the city won't have such a lot on us."

"That's all very fine, but on the other hand we may float way out on the ocean, a thousand miles or more, before a ship passes near enough to see us. And in the meantime a storm might come up, upset the vessel and drown us both. Anyway, these provisions won't last forever, and when they're gone we'll starve to death. Then we'll never get home to tell what we've been through," said Will.

"Say, you wouldn't be happy unless you were miserable, would you, Will? I don't know what you will do when you grow up, get married and have to hustle for a living if you strike a snag. Everybody has his ups and downs. My father failed twice in business, but he didn't sit down and cry when things were looking black. He hustled around to get a fresh grip, and he got it. Now he's doing fine and has money in bank against another rainy day. You're always looking for trouble when things are not running smooth. You'd kick if a house fell on you."

"If a house fell on me I wouldn't be able to kick, you chump."

"My remark was not meant to be taken in the literal sense. Have you ate all you can stuff into yourself?"

"Yes. I'm through."

"Then we'll get back on deck and look around. We'll go out the back way, through the passage. I'm going forward to look into the forecabin and see how things are there."

He knew that the "sailors' parlor" would be dark, and though he was as plucky as any lad of his size, he decided to take the revolver with him, as a precaution.

He got it, and then he and Will walked out on the main deck.

The brig's deck looked in fair order, though a number of things were scattered about, as if dropped by the crew in the hurry of a sudden departure.

The vessel was equipped with four boats, besides a skiff tied down on the roof of the galley.

Two of the boats were missing, and the falls were dangling close to the water on the port side.

The other three boats were in their places.

The galley door was ajar, and the boys looked in.

Pots and pans were scattered on the floor, and the little house in great confusion.

The stove was half full of dead ashes.

An overturned can proved to be full of unground coffee.

"We'll have coffee for dinner," said Will, putting it back on a shelf, "that is if we can find any decent water."

A barrel strapped outside, with a loose, square wooden cover over a square hole held by a piece of leather for a hinge, was nearly full of water.

Jimmy investigated it, and said if it was boiled first he guessed they could make use of it.

Leaving the galley they continued forward to the opening of the forecabin, the slide of which was wide open.

Jimmy stuck his head down and shouted "Ahoy!"

He received no reply, and did not expect any.

"There's not a soul aboard, as I supposed," he said.

"Are you going down?"

"Yes, but I'll get that lantern I saw hanging in the galley. No use trying to look the place over in the dark."

"Say, look at that cage at the back of the galley. I didn't notice it before. The door is smashed. Is that the way they carry livestock on a ship?" said Will.

"I suppose so. It looks too big for poultry. Maybe they carried half a dozen pigs so the skipper and the mates could have fresh pork as long as the animals lasted. Hello! I hear a rustling noise down in the forecabin. Maybe the last of the porkers is down there."

Jimmy looked down and uttered an exclamation.

"What's the matter?" asked Will.

"I see a pair of glittering eyes in that corner."

"There must be a man aboard there, then."

"No man would have such eyes. Take a look."

Will did, and also saw the eyes, which looked red and fiery, and were moving back and forth like the swing of a pendulum.

"Holy mackerel! It's some kind of an animal," he said. "Maybe it's a lion or a tig—Oh, heavens, it's coming toward us."

"Nonsense!" said Jimmy, taking another look. "Wait till I get the lantern and I'll find out what the eyes belong to."

He ran to the galley, took down the lantern, and was lighting it, when he heard an awful yell from his companion.

Looking out, he saw Will running away from the fore-castle opening for all he was worth, with fear stamped on his features.

Then he saw issue from the opening a great flat head, followed by a long, thick neck, and a still longer body.

A serpent, seemingly of enormous size, was gliding out on deck.

That was enough for Jimmy.

As Will flew past, heading for the cabin, Jimmy cut after him, and neither stopped till they hit the cabin passage.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT WAS IN THE BOTTLE.

Then Jimmy faced about and looked forward.

A big snake, of the boa constrictor species, and about twenty feet long, was gliding about the deck near the entrance to the fore-castle.

"My gracious!" cried Jimmy. "What are we going to do? That reptile will make short work of both of us if it can reach us."

Will was almost in a state of collapse.

He had caught sight of the snake at close quarters, and the shock had scared him from his boots up.

He got as far as the cabin, and rushing into the stateroom he had occupied during the night, slammed the door and put his back to it.

Jimmy, having recovered his nerve, stood at the passage door watching the boa.

It was a big specimen, but not so large as it appeared at first sight.

It glided around the forward part of the vessel, and then partly entered the galley.

It had found food there after the evacuation of the brig, and was looking for more.

It was disappointed.

Then it started aft.

Jimmy waited till the reptile got within easy range, and fired his revolver at it.

The bullet nicked its neck, and the boa uttered an angry hiss.

Jimmy fired again and wounded its body.

Another hiss, and the snake, spying the boy, started for him.

Jimmy stood his ground and pumped a third bullet at the reptile, which entered its mouth and drew blood.

Then he shut the door and bolted it.

Rushing through the cabin, Jimmy closed the companion door and bolted that.

He didn't believe that the snake could force entrance, but the uncomfortable reflection remained—that the reptile had full possession of the deck.

He and Will were prisoners in the cabin.

It didn't take him long to figure out the cause of the desertion of the brig in a hurry by officers and crew.

The boa, which was a passenger on the vessel, probably intended for a circus menagerie, had broken out of its cage and made things so unpleasant for all hands that to save their lives the brig was abandoned.

Possibly an investigation of the fore-castle would show that two or three of the crew had been killed by the snake.

What Jimmy feared most was that the boa might crash down through the skylight, in which case there would be something doing in the cabin.

He heard his snakeship bump against the passage door and hiss outside.

After awhile he heard it no more.

He routed Will out of his stateroom.

"Where is it now?" asked his companion.

"Somewhere about the deck, or it might be up on the poop," he answered.

"This is awful," said Will. "I knew something else would happen to us."

"Of course you did. I'm afraid you're a Jonah. You're always expecting the worst to happen."

"What are we going to do? We can't go on deck now."

"I've three bullets left. Maybe I'll kill the thing."

"I heard you fire. Did you hit it?"

"I did, and made it squeal."

"It's too big for you to kill it."

"Not if I hit it in the right place."

"You mean the head?"

"If I could lodge a ball in its brain that ought to put it out of business."

"You couldn't get near enough to do that."

"I cut its mouth just the same. It was only six feet away when I fired the last time."

"You have more nerve than me."

"If I didn't I'd feel sorry for myself. Let's go to the passage door and take a look."

"Nixy. The snake might be watching the door."

"I don't believe it. Come on."

Will wouldn't, and Jimmy had to go alone.

He unbolted the door and opened it cautiously an inch.

The snake wasn't in sight.

He ventured to open the door wider and poke his head out.

The snake lay stretched out near the port poop ladder.

Its head lay in a pool of blood.

It was not dead, but no longer formidable.

Jimmy's last shot had entered the base of its brain, through its mouth, and had practically settled its career.

The boy looked at it attentively.

Then he went into the pantry, got the empty potted meat jar and, taking aim at the snake, threw it.

It hit the reptile on the neck, and it worked its body around, but not with any great degree of animation.

"I guess I did it up," said Jimmy.

He called Will and told him the snake was pretty well done for.

"I'm going to take another shot at its head," he said.

Will came to the door and watched him approach the snake.

"Better be careful," he called out.

Jimmy was careful, though the boa did not look very aggressive.

He fired two shots into its head and settled its goose for good, though the snake's tail was not entirely motionless until after sunset that day.

The finish of the boa constrictor was a great relief to the boys.

It would have gone hard with them to have been cooped up in the cabin with such a big reptile at liberty, and liable to come on them unawares if they ventured out.

"Seems to me the skipper and officers should have done as well as I did," said Jimmy. "I wonder how far out to sea they were when they left the brig. The captain will have a nice explanation to make to the owners."

The boys went on the poop to look for a sail, but none was in sight.

Jimmy decided that the brig out to be brought up on her course and the wheel lashed, even, though this course was taking them further away from home.

This was done with Will's help.

The outlook indicated continued fair weather, and before it changed they hoped to be sighted and taken off.

The wind freshened during the afternoon, and the brig bowled along in fine shape, just as though her officers and crew were aboard.

The sailboat was sailing along the lee side of the vessel, which shut off the wind from her sail.

"Old Mitchell will wonder where we have carried his boat," said Jimmy. "He will call at my house as sure as anything and tell my mother that you and I went off in his boat yesterday afternoon and haven't returned. As he saw us start for the Heads, he'll judge we were caught by the fog. My father will hire a tug and start out looking for us, but that won't do him any good. If we don't get back soon our folks will fear that we were capsized and drowned."

When the boys came on deck next morning the wind had calmed down and the brig was not making much headway.

Jimmy thought it a good chance to drop into the sailboat and lower the sail.

This he did, and put the stoppers about it.

To make sure that the little boat wouldn't get away, he

called for another rope, and Will threw him one, which he made fast to the sailboat's stern.

Then picking up the empty gin bottle with the paper inside, he stuffed it into his pockets and returned on board.

He got a corkscrew and drew the cork of the bottle.

Then he pulled out a stiff roll of paper.

"Now we'll see what the message is," he said.

"I think we ought to write a message about ourselves, put it in the bottle and send it adrift," said Will.

"We can do that," nodded Jimmy, spreading the stiff piece of parchment-like paper on the pantry shelf and smoothing out the kinks in it.

Both boys bent over it.

"Seems to be a sort of chart," said Will. "There's a cross at that corner with the four cardinal points of the compass—north, east, south and west."

"You're right," nodded Jimmy. "The outline, filling most of the paper, indicates the marking of an island, for the word 'Water' is written on the four sides of it. This indentation here is marked 'Cove.' Behind it the word 'Bluffs.' Over here is a 'hill.' On hill three rude trees, with feathery tops, in line. Here 'Banana Grove.' Down there 'Beach.' Further down another 'Cove.' Under the compass marking are the words 'Latitude' and 'Longitude,' which are not given. The name of the island is not given, either. As it stands it's an incomplete chart of an island, and amounts to nothing."

"If it amounts to nothing, why was it so carefully corked up in that bottle and sent adrift?" said Will.

"Ask me something easier. It might have been done for a joke."

"Are you going to keep it as a curiosity?"

"Sure. I want to show it to old Mitchell. He might be able to discover something about it that we can't. It isn't drawn on common paper, but upon some stiff material like the bleached skin of an animal. Looks as if the person who made it intended it for some purpose, but failed to finish it."

"Maybe he was shipwrecked on the island, and didn't know its name, nor the latitude or longitude. He could have figured the compass directions from the position of the sun. That would show him east and west, and by standing with his arms extended, one toward the sun and the other away from it, he could easily locate north and south," said Will.

"Great head you've got, Will. Your supposition might be correct. A sailor wrecked on a lone island he had never seen before might easily be excused if he didn't know its name, or its latitude or longitude. Still he should have some general idea of the latter unless he was an ignorant fellow."

"Sailors are not very well educated. Most of them, the chaps before the mast, are not familiar with the principles of navigation. They couldn't sail a ship under varying conditions to save their lives. At any rate, I have heard so."

"They're not hired to sail a vessel, but to follow the orders they get from the officers. Navigation is a science which has to be learned like anything else that requires study. You've got to be something of a mathematician in order to make the necessary calculations when you start in to take the ship's position by the sun with the aid of a sextant. This is done every day at noon, if the weather permits. When you can't get the sun you've got to get around it in other ways, as near as you can," said Jimmy.

He folded up the paper and put it in his pocket, then the boys went on deck.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND DAY ABOARD.

Miles and miles away against the shiny horizon the boys saw a sail.

The vessel, however, was not coming toward them, but sailing in a contrary direction to the brig.

It was quite possible that her officers made out the brig through the glass, but the distance was too great for them even to suspect that there was anything wrong aboard of her.

In fact, had the two craft been much closer now that the brig was holding up to her course, she would have looked all right.

The boys watched the distant sail till it grew indistinct, and finally disappeared altogether.

"Say," said Will, suddenly, "we ought to have a flag displayed upside down. That's a signal of distress. How is any one to know there is anything the matter with us unless we call their attention to the fact?"

"Good idea. I didn't think of it. You're some good after all. We'll go below and hunt for a flag."

"Where do they keep the flags aboard?"

"In a locker in one of the rooms."

They repaired to the cabin and searched for the flag-locker.

They found it after a short search, and the first bunting they pulled out was the British merchant flag, red, with the union jack in the upper left hand corner.

"This must be an English craft," said Will.

"I guess it is."

"We haven't found out her name."

"It's on the stern, of course, and also on either side of the bows."

"Maybe it's on the safe in the captain's room."

"Run and look."

Will did so, and presently returned with the information that the name of the brig was the Melbourne Castle, and that she belonged in Cardiff, Wales.

"I'm thinking the owners stand a good chance of losing her. She was bound from some Australian port to San Francisco when abandoned, I guess."

"I think she came from the East Indies more like," said Will.

"What gives you that idea?"

"The fact that she had that big snake aboard."

"I tip my hat to you, Will. Your head is growing bigger every minute. If you weren't what teacher calls a pessimist—"

"Hold on, don't call me hard names."

"That's what you are—a pessimist. You are continually looking on the worst side of things. If some astrologer prophesied that an earthquake was going to wipe out San Francisco on a certain date, you'd believe it, and harp on the subject every day till the time came around and you found that the prophecy amounted to nothing."

"I wouldn't be surprised if it was knocked out by an earthquake," said Will. "There have been several big shocks a few years ago. They didn't do any great damage, but who knows what might happen from the next one?"

"There you go. I suppose if you could have your way you'd leave the State?"

"No; California is good enough for me."

"I'm glad to hear it. I haven't heard of any real Californian going back on the Coast. It has the finest climate in the world. When it gets to be thoroughly appreciated by outsiders there'll be a rush like there was in the days of gold to take up homes."

Jimmy took the English flag on deck and hoisted it, union jack down, to the end of the spanker boom.

It blew out there in the morning breeze, and the boys felt more comfortable.

"If a vessel comes near enough to us to make that out, we should be rescued," said Will. "I don't believe any captain would pass us by without trying to find out what was the matter."

"He would be a pretty mean skipper who wouldn't investigate," said Jimmy. "There are captains, though, I've heard, who wouldn't go out of their way to save their brother, but there aren't many of them."

After dinner Jimmy suggested that it would be a good idea to hoist the sailboat up to one of the davits.

"How are we going to do it?" said Will, who thought the job was more than they could handle.

"Work the boat around to the port side, where the vacant davits are, hook a pair on to her, and hoist," answered Jimmy.

"But can we hoist her?" said Will, who doubted it.

"Sure. One end at a time, little by little. Why not?"

Will didn't know why not except that he didn't think their united muscle would do the trick.

Jimmy, however, said there was no use going to sleep over it.

"If it's going to be done it must be done now while the brig is sailing easy in this light wind," he said.

So they got to work.

The sailboat was pulled around the brig's stern and up as far as the nearest davits.

There she was made fast, and Jimmy slid down into her, and after some trouble attached the falls fore and aft.

Returning on board the brig, he and Will started to haul the sailboat up by the nose first, and then by the stern.

They puffed and sweated over the job, but Jimmy was bossing it, and Will had to do his share.

After raising the boat a yard out of the water they took a rest.

Then they raised her another yard, and finally got her up to the davits, where she was secured by a dozen ropes.

With her mast up she looked rather odd there, but Jimmy asked what difference did that make.

After another rest Jimmy suggested that they ought to try and shorten sail on the brig.

"Do you mean that we're to pull down those big sails?" said Will, aghast at the idea.

"If we don't and it comes to blow hard, you know what will happen," said Jimmy.

"But we can't pull them down."

"We'll hunt out the right ropes, let them go, and the yards will drop of their own weight."

"That won't furl the sails. The canvas will hang and flap about."

"I know it, but the wind won't be able to get any hold on it."

"In that case we'll just float around on the ocean."

"We won't make a whole lot of headway. I don't intend to take in all the sails, only the lower ones. We'll leave the higher ones spread, and the spanker aft. If a storm should come up we can lower the spanker easily enough. The upper ones can blow away if they won't hold."

"You're not going to begin now, are you? I'm dead tired."

"No. The weather will hold for some days yet, I guess, from the looks of the sky, though I'm no great weather prophet. We'll start in to-morrow morning and take our time about it."

"Say, how are we heading now?"

"West by south."

"Where will that take us if we keep right on?"

"To Asia."

"What part of Asia?"

"I couldn't tell you. We might land among the Philippines, go ashore on the coast of Japan, slide into China, or bang up against some of the islands this side of the places I've mentioned."

"How long would it take us to get across?"

"Oh, a great many weeks."

"Have we food enough to last us that long?"

"Not in the pantry."

"Is there any more aboard?"

"I guess there is more in the storeroom under the cabin."

"How do you know there's a storeroom under the cabin?"

"I've heard there always was."

"Let's go and investigate."

Jimmy had no objection, and they entered the cabin.

They found a trap-door near the companion stairs.

This led down into the lazaretto or ship's storeroom.

It was easily opened.

Then Jimmy lighted the lantern and went down.

He found quite a lot of stores there, and notified his companion.

That greatly relieved Will's mind.

When they got back on deck they found that the wind had veered around a point or so, and the sails were flapping and making a great noise.

Jimmy unlashed the wheel, brought the vessel on her new course, more to the south, and tied it up again.

"You're quite a sailor," grinned Will.

"Sure I am. I'll be a regular old salt by the time we get back. If there were more of us I could bring the brig around and head for California. You don't know half of what I'm able to do when I have to exert myself."

Twilight was coming on, so they went to supper.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAN FROM THE SEA.

"Now," said Jimmy, when they returned to the poop, under a glorious sparkling sky, the brig gliding swiftly along under a spanking breeze, "how shall we amuse ourselves till we get sleep?"

"If we had a checker-board, or a pack of cards, we could pass the time first rate."

"Then I appoint you as a committee of one to go and hunt for one or the other."

"I'll go if you will."

"What do you want me for? Go yourself."

"No. The cabin is dark, I don't want to go alone."

"What are you afraid of? Here's a match, light the lamp under the skylight."

"I guess we can amuse ourselves lying here and looking up at the stars."

Jimmy chuckled and remained quiet awhile, then he said:

"Will do you know, I think this brig is haunted."

"Haunted!" cried Will, starting up in alarm.

"I heard strange sounds in the cabin last night, like somebody was walking up and down in there."

"You didn't," gasped Will.

"Who's telling this story, you or I?"

"You're trying to scare me."

"Are you scared?" said Jimmy, hiding a grin.

"No, but——"

"I got up and looked into the cabin, and what do you suppose I saw?"

"I don't know," gurgled Will.

"I saw a rat as big as a house."

"Oh!" ejaculated Will, much relieved. "Only a rat."

"I fired my shoe at it, and it flew out through the passage. Now, when a ship is haunted, the rats always come out of the hold."

"Who told you that?"

"Old Mitchell. He sailed in a haunted bark once, and he told me the story. Want to hear it?"

"Yes."

Jimmy, who had a great imagination, at once improvised a horrible ghost story from various yarns Mitchell had told him at odd times, and by the time he finished he had Will's hair standing on end.

Then he started a second one about a sailor who was washed overboard, and whose spirit returned every night to upset the feelings of the crew.

"Did he really come back every night?" said Will.

"He sure did. He came floating up alongside on a hencoop just about this time, and would hail the brig in grave-like tones this way."

Jimmy was about to give an illustration of the dead sailor's voice when suddenly, from over the vessel's quarter, came a hail in sepulchral tones:

"Brig ahoy! Brig ahoy! For the love of heaven, throw a rope!"

The effect on both boys was decidedly startling.

Will uttered a howl of fear and turned over on his face.

Jimmy, on the contrary, sat up and listened.

"Brig ahoy! Save me, for the love of heaven!" came the hail again.

Jimmy rushed to the rail and looked over.

He saw a small boat and a gaunt-looking man standing up in it clinging to the end of a rope hanging over the side.

The man, who was looking up, saw him, and cried out again: "Save me!"

Jimmy picked up a small coil of rope and flung it to the man, the other end being fastened to a ring in the deck.

The man caught it in a feeble way and wound it with an effort about his body.

"Pull me aboard," he said. "I'm too weak to climb."

"Will, come here!" shouted Jimmy. "Come here, quick!"

"I don't want anything to do with the ghost," returned his companion.

"It's no ghost, you chump! It's a shipwrecked man. Help me pull him aboard."

Will came and looked over the side.

He didn't like the looks of the white-faced man.

"Are you going to take him aboard?" he said.

"What do you want me to do, leave him there? Get hold of the line and haul. Pull like a good fellow. Once more. Now, then, another."

The man's head came up to the rail, and he grasped it like a drowning man catching at a straw.

Jimmy reached down and hauled him up to the rail, and then over it on deck.

He rolled over and lay there.

Jimmy dashed down into the cabin, stepped on the table and took down the decanter of whisky and a glass.

He hurried back to the exhausted man.

Pouring some of the liquor into the glass, he put it to the man's lips.

The fellow took a mouthful, and it nearly strangled him, but he got it down.

He felt revived, sat up and asked for more.

"That goes to the right spot, my hearty," he said, in a hollow voice. "I'm nearly fagged out, but that stuff puts new life into me."

"You're hungry, I suppose?" said Jimmy.

"Hain't had nothin' to eat for a week."

"Go to the pantry and fetch up a cracker and some of the white wine. It won't do for him to eat anything solid for awhile," said Jimmy to Will.

Will didn't want to go, but Jimmy said he'd kick him if he didn't, so he went.

He stopped on the way to light the cabin lamp, and then he lit the pantry lamp.

He returned with a cracker and a cup full of the wine.

"Dip that cracker in the wine and eat it," said Jimmy to the rescued man.

The man obeyed in an eager way, and the boy had to caution him to go slow.

For an exhausted sea wanderer, the fellow, who appeared to be a sailor, came around pretty fast.

He sat up, with his back against the rise of the cabin, and stared at the two boys after finishing the cracker and wine.

"I feel a lot better, mateys," he said, "but if I had a reg'lar meal I'd feel better still. Where's the skipper, or the mate on duty? I'm ready to give an account of myself."

"I'm the skipper, and this chap is my chief mate," replied Jimmy. "The regular officers and crew went on a vacation for their health. Anyway, they're not aboard now."

"What's that?" said the derelict, looking astonished. "You're the skipper? Why, you're only a kid."

"I can't help that. I'm running this brig."

"You are!" said the sailor, with the accent on the You.

"Bust my toplights! What kind of a hooker have I struck?"

"What do you care as long as you're safe?"

"But two boys can't sail a full-rigged brig. Ain't there no one else aboard?"

"Not another soul but yourself. Since you've turned up, we'll elect you the crew."

"Say, am I wanderin' in my head or is this a straight yarn you're tellin' me?"

"It's the truth, if that's what you mean."

"How did it come about that you two are the only ones aboard?"

Jimmy explained in a few words.

"May I be keelhailed if that hain't as strange as any yarn I ever listened to. This craft ran away with you the night afore last?"

"Yes."

"And she's been sailin' west ever since?"

"She has."

"At about this gait?"

"She went faster yesterday."

"You've been at sea about forty hours, and if she's averaged twelve miles an hour, we're about 500 miles from the coast. How d'ye s'pose you're goin' to get back?"

"We expected to be rescued by a passing vessel, but now you've turned up, and seem to be a sailor, maybe we can turn around and sail back."

"I'm too weak to do anythin' for a spell. By the time I'm on my pins again we're likely to be two or three hundred miles further to sea. How's she headin'?"

"The last time I looked at the compass card her course was west, southwest."

"West, sou'west, eh?" said the derelict, reflectively. "How's grub aboard?"

"There's plenty."

"Will it last us three a couple of months?"

"I guess so, but we don't expect to stay aboard as long as that."

"Oh, you don't? Not if it would pay you well to do it?"

"How would it pay us?"

"S'pose I could p'int out how it would? S'pose I could show you how you could fetch home a chest full of gold, would you be willing to stand in with me?"

"I guess you're a bit light in the head yet, my friend."

"Me light in the head! Don't you believe no such nonsense."

"But you're talking nonsense."

"About the gold, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Sonny, I know an island where there's more gold money goin' to waste than you could count in a month."

"Get out, you're dreaming."

"All right, matey, we won't say no more about it now, 'cause I hain't in no shape for arguin' the matter. Bring me a couple more crackers, with a piece of meat to go between 'em, and let me have three fingers of that whisky, and then I'll turn into an empty bunk and take a real good snooze. In the mornin' I'll feel better, and we'll talk things over."

They helped the derelict down into the cabin and put him in a chair.

Then Jimmy handed him two crackers, with some potted tongue, which he cut up small, between them, and measured out the whisky.

After the sailor had put the food and whisky under his waistband, they assisted him into one of the unoccupied berths.

"Thank ye, my lads. It strikes me we'll put together yet. You kin call me to breakfast when you have it ready."

He turned over, and in two minutes was snoring loudly.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STORY THE SAILOR TOLD.

The man from the sea was sleeping soundly when Jimmy turned out on the following morning.

"I wonder how he came to be in that little boat?" the boy asked himself.

Before they turned in the night before both lads had figured on the matter, and the only conclusion they could arrive at, in default of an explanation from the derelict himself, was that he was a survivor from some wreck.

The sailor had intimated that he had been a week without food, and he certainly looked pretty well done up.

Whether he had been longer than that in the boat was a question yet to be cleared up by the man himself.

His talk about an island where there was more gold money going to waste than the boys could count in a month, they regarded as a wild delusion, or a sailor's yarn which had no foundation, in fact.

After taking a look at the sailor, Jimmy went into the pantry.

Among the stores there was a case of canned soup.

The boys hadn't sampled any of it yet, and Jimmy thought that a tin of it would be the most suitable article for the derelict to breakfast on.

"He oughtn't to have much solid food till dinner-time," thought the boy, who had heard that half-starved people should be carefully handled at first with regard to their diet. "I'll start a fire in the galley, and warm the soup while I cook a pot of coffee."

Jimmy was no great cook, but he had seen his mother make coffee often enough to have an idea how it was prepared.

Of course, coffee is made in various ways, but the general method is alike.

Jimmy's mother never boiled her coffee.

She put a tablespoonful for each person in the pot, poured boiling water on it without measuring the quantity, which her experience gauged as a cupful for each spoonful of coffee, and enough over to suit her ideas.

Then she allowed the pot to simmer on the back of the stove. Jimmy followed the same modus operandi and found it a success.

He also fried a quantity of raw potatoes in the fat he discovered in the galley, and put the soup on to warm.

Will turned up while he was thus engaged.

"Anything for me to do?" asked his friend.

"Yes. We might as well do things shipshape this morning. Go into the cabin and set the table for three," replied Jimmy.

"Seems funny to have a third party aboard," said Will.

"He's a tough rooster. I'll bet he's a big rascal."

"He isn't a Sunday-school scholar, that's a fact. I'm glad he turned up, for he can help us work the brig. We ought to be able to wear her around and start back home."

"Then there won't be any need of our reducing sail this morning," said Will, who didn't fancy the job.

"No, I guess not. The only trouble is that as long as we hold on our present course we're getting further away every minute. There's a strong breeze this morning, and the brig is going like a racehorse."

"If we turn around the wind will be against us, and we won't make such good time."

"Yes, we will, if we get the yards braced right. A ship will sail in any direction on most any wind if properly handled."

"I doubt if we can handle this brig properly. She needs her regular crew to make things go right."

"Half a crew can handle a vessel in an emergency as well as a full crew, provided the weather holds right."

"But will the weather hold right with us?"

"I'm in hopes it will. It's a fine day, without a cloud in sight."

"The weather must have been fine out here for a week or more, or the sailor could not have kept afloat in that small boat."

"I guess it has. He'll tell us all about his experience by and by. Go on now and set the table," and Will went.

By the time he had the table ready, Jimmy had breakfast ready.

In addition to the soup for the derelict, and the coffee and

fried potatoes for themselves, the boys had some fried ham, some crackers and a pot of marmalade.

This spread was laid out, and then Jimmy woke the sailor.

He got up without assistance, though he was rocky on his pins, and looked white and debilitated.

"What's this, my hearties?" he asked, looking at the soup.

"Soup. It's for you. You can have some crackers and coffee, too," said Jimmy.

The sailor tasted the soup, and declared it was fine.

"Reg'lar cabin stuff," he said. "I guess I'll come around a deal quicker under this here diet. Who's the cook aboard this hooker?"

"I am," said Jimmy. "I'm skipper, cook and half the crew."

"You're a smart kid, matey."

"Sure I am. My mother has told me that fifty times. What's your name?"

"Jim Blaine. What's yours?"

"Jimmy French. My friend's name is Will Larkins."

"Well, Jimmy, is the hooker on the same course?"

"Yes."

"She's bowling along in fine style, eh?"

"Yes. That's the worst of it. We're getting further and further away from California every hour."

"Headin' west sou'west?" said the derelict.

"Yes."

"Good!" ejaculated the sailor, in a tone of satisfaction.

"Good!" cried Jimmy. "What do you say that for? I call it bad for us."

"Don't you believe it, matey. We're goin' to keep right on west-sou'west, or about that as near as we kin, and we're goin' to sail back one of these days with gold enough to set us up for our nat'ral lives."

The boys gasped and looked at each other.

"I say, Mister Blaine, what kind of a yarn are you giving us?" said Jimmy.

"Avast with the Mister, my hearties. Call me Jim. I ain't used to havin' no handle spliced on to my name. As to a yarn about that there gold, what I'm tellin' you is a fact."

"How do you know it is?"

"'Cause I had it from a party who seen the treasure."

"If he saw it, why didn't he take it away?"

"'Cause he couldn't. He was wrecked on the island, and he didn't have no means of carryin' it off. When he was took off he intended to go back and get it."

"What prevented him?"

"It was this way: I was aboard the bark that saved him. We put in at the island for fresh water, as our supply had run short, and we found him marooned there."

"Why didn't he take the gold with him when he was saved?"

"He was afraid to let on about it for fear the skipper would claim it and keep most of it, which he might have done. A common sailor ain't got no rights, partic'larly when he's took off an island like that. He and me chummed together on the way back, and he told me all about the gold, and we arranged to go back at the first chance and get it."

"Well?"

"He'd made a chart of the island, which he showed me. It wasn't finished, but he said he could easily add what was missin'. He didn't know the name of the island, nor the latitude and longitude, but he got all that from the chief mate while we was fetchin' the water aboard. He didn't put it down on the chart, but kept it separate on the paper the mate gave him, 'cause he was afraid he might lose the chart which he kept in an old Dutch gin bottle corked up."

Jimmy looked at Will, and Will looked at Jimmy.

Was the chart they had picked up in San Francisco Bay the one referred to by the derelict?

The description certainly fitted it.

If it was, how came the bottle to be floating there?

The boys were interested in learning.

"Did he lose the bottle overboard?" asked Jimmy.

"No, he didn't, but it's lost just the same, and he was lost with it."

"How?"

"Two months after we left the island, when we expected to reach 'Frisco in a couple of weeks or so, we ran into an awful gale. It lasted several days, and when it was over the barky was leakin' so badly that no amount of pumpin' would keep her afloat. So the skipper abandoned her and put off with all hands in two boats. The boat Bill was in with the bottle was the last to put off. I was in the other, fort'nitly. She was in charge of the chief mate. I mean the one Bill was in. Just as they got a length away the mainmast fell over on her without warnin', the boat was smashed and all aboard went down to Davy Jones. We waited 'round for somebody to come up,

but nobody did, so at last we pulled away, with that gig I came here in last night towin' astern loaded with grub. We expected to be seen and rescued in a week, but though we seen sev'ral sail, none seen us. So we knocked around more'n a month till the provisions was nearly gone. One misty evenin' we pulled the gig alongside as usual to get our supper, and I was sent into her to hand out some of the stuff. I seen there wasn't enough to last all hands more'n three days, and as the chances of bein' picked up was not good, I didn't fancy the look of things."

The sailor paused and leered at the boys.

"Go on," said Jimmy.

"After I looked the grub over I says to myself that self-preservation was the first law of natur', and that I wouldn't get another chance like the present. The night bein' foggy, if the gig broke loose the others in the long boat wouldn't be able to see where it drifted to. Such bein' the case, I crawled for'ard, whipped out my clasp-knife, and cut the rope as slick as a whistle. The gig drifted off as I expected it would."

The boys looked at Blaine with disgust, with perhaps a stronger feeling as the picture of the long boat, with many men aboard, left without food, rose before their eyes, and all through the treachery of the rascal who was facing them and telling them the plain facts without the least show of remorse.

"That was a mean trick," said Jimmy.

"I'll allow it warn't just right, shipmate, but in a case of that kind it's every man for himself. If somebody else had been sent into the gig he might have done the same. Well, the skipper noticed right away that the gig was gone, and he gave a shout. I heard him orderin' the men to pull around and look for me and the boat. They called out to me, expectin' I'd shout back and guide 'em where to look. But I warn't no sich fool. Havin' done the trick, I warn't goin' to sp'ile it by helpin' 'em to find me. When I didn't answer, I heard the bunch swearin' terribly. I reckon they suspected the truth, and if the skipper looked at the end of the rope, which he probably did, the proof was there. They rowed this way and that in the mist, but it was like huntin' for a needle in a haystack to find the gig in the fog and darkness, and so I got clear off. I was three weeks in that gig, up to last night, and had finished up every scrap of food, and had about given up hope, when I run foul of this here hooker just in time to save my bacon. So here I am, livin' on the fat of the land with you chaps, on a vessel that's goin' to take us to that there island and fill our pockets with gold money. Then we'll sail back, and you kids kin open a bank, and live like kings for the rest of your nat'ral lives," said the sailor, with a wicked grin.

Jimmy and Will had by this time lost all the satisfaction they had begun to feel in having a real sailor aboard to help them run the brig.

They realized that the man was a conscienceless rascal and could not be trusted.

Jimmy, however, was curious to learn how the sailor expected to reach the island where he claimed the gold was, since both the chart, with the name of the island, and its latitude and longitude, had apparently gone down with the man who made the alleged discovery, so he put the question to the derelict.

"Nothin' easier, shipmate," grinned the sailor. "I've got the paper the mate handed Bill."

"How did you get it when you say the man went down in the second boat?"

"I hooked it from Bill some days afore. He never missed it. I was afraid he might give me the slip when we reached 'Frisco, so I thought I'd get the jump on him. It was lucky I got it from him, seein' how things turned out. If I hadn't, that would have been the end of the treasure as far as I was concerned."

The sailor leaned back and chuckled, while he looked more wicked than ever.

CHAPTER IX.

STANDING WATCH.

Jimmy and Will regarded the rescued man with fear and repulsion.

The same thought struck them both that in a day or two he would have recovered his strength, and then he would proceed to boss the brig.

He looked well able to master both of them.

If they didn't fall in with his views, he would lose no time in making them.

The prospect did not look encouraging.

Jimmy felt that he and his companion must have a talk on the subject at once.

"Pick up the dishes, Will, and help carry them to the galley," he said.

"Hold on, shipmate," interposed the sailor, "is there a pipe and backy around?"

"There's a pipe and a bag of tobacco in the pantry on a shelf. I'll bring it to you," replied Jimmy.

"That's right, and don't forget a match," said Blaine. "I'm goin' on the poop to have a smoke. Ain't had one since the barky went down. You kin join me there when you've cleaned up."

Jimmy brought him what he wanted, and he staggered up the companion stairs.

"Well, it's too bad that old villain came aboard here," said Jimmy, on reaching the galley where his companion was heating water to wash the dishes with. "It is my opinion he'll upset all our calculations."

"He'll make us sail the brig to the island where he says the gold is," replied Will, "and heaven knows where that is; probably in the South Seas, where most of the islands are."

"There's no doubt of that. He's dead set that way."

"Do you believe there is any gold on that island?"

"I didn't till he spoke about the chart in the Dutch gin bottle. We've got that, and it wasn't drawn for nothing."

"But what good is it? It doesn't tell the name of the island, nor the latitude or longitude."

"I know, but the sailor said he has the paper containing that information."

"Suppose he has, how is he going to take the brig to the island unless he understands navigation, and he doesn't look as if he did?"

"I give it up; but he talks as if he expected to find the island without much trouble."

"Talk is cheap. I don't believe anybody that's not a navigator could find it. Anyway, I don't want to go there with him. Suppose we were so lucky as to reach the island, and that we found the gold and took it aboard. I'll bet he'd chase us ashore and leave us marooned there like the other sailor was."

"He couldn't work the brig alone, so I guess he wouldn't leave us behind."

"He might do us later when he thought it was safe. A man who will work such a scurvy trick on his companions as he did with the gig isn't to be trusted at any stage of the game."

"Trusted! I should say not. While he's aboard we'll have to sleep with one eye open."

"You've got that revolver. Better not let him see it."

"He knows I've got it, for I told him last night about shooting the snake, which, by the way, we must get rid of, for it's beginning to smell. There's only one cartridge in it. I must hunt for some more."

The boys finished washing the dishes, and carried them to the pantry.

They went to look at the dead snake.

To lift the reptile over the bulwark they needed a sling and hoist, for it was heavy, otherwise they would have to cut a hole through the bulwark large enough to shove it through.

Jimmy decided that by crawling out on the main yard he could pass the end of a rope over the yard between the pieces of line holding the bottom of the maintopsail, and in this way they could get rid of the snake.

He easily found a rope long enough for the purpose, climbed the ratlines with it, reached the yard and made his way out by the aid of the footropes.

He did the trick and returned to the deck.

He tied one end of the rope around the middle of the snake, and then he and Will hoisted it over the bulwark, where it hung head and tail down.

Lowering it far enough, Jimmy climbed on the bulwark and severed the rope close to where it was tied.

The dead snake dropped to the water and sank out of sight.

Then the boys went on the poop and joined the sailor who had been watching their work.

"That was a big snake," said the derelict; "and you killed it all by yourselves?"

Jimmy said they did.

"You kids are no milksops, which I'm glad to know. We're goin' to pull first rate together."

"You don't mean to help us turn the brig and sail back to California?"

"Don't you want to go to that there island and bring away the treasure? I thought you boys would jump at the chance."

"How far is the island from here?"

"Allowin' we're 600 miles, or thereabouts, from the coast of North America, I should say it was about 3,500 miles to the sou'west."

"That's a long distance."

"If things go right we ought to get there in a month."

"Do you understand navigation?"

The sailor admitted that he did not.

"How do you think you will find the island, then?"

"I've got the name, and the latitude and longitude, and when we get near the island we'll signal some vessel and get the right course."

"Suppose we don't meet with any vessel?"

"We'll put in at the first island we come to and get our course there."

Jimmy thought that a very uncertain way of fetching the island.

"What's the name of the island?" he asked.

The sailor shut one eye and looked at the boy.

"I'll tell you when we get down where it is."

Clearly he was cautious about giving out information.

"Is it inhabited?"

"Not that I know of. Bill said he didn't see anybody while he was there."

"How long was he there?"

"Three months or so."

"You know where the gold is hidden?"

"Nat'rally I have an idea, or it wouldn't pay to go there."

"Is it hidden in a cove?"

"No."

"On top of a bluff, then?"

"What gave you the idea there was a bluff on that island?" said the sailor, looking hard at the boy.

"I just asked you."

"Well, it hain't on the top of no bluff."

"I suppose there is no use of me asking you where it is hidden, if you know?"

"Not the slightest. I don't know exactly myself, but I've got a clew."

"Three thousand five hundred miles is a long distance to go. Suppose we run into a storm, how are you going to manage the brig?"

"Leave that to me, sonny. We'll get enough sail off this hooker in an hour to make things safe in anythin' but the worst kind of a gale. She looks tight, and ought to ride the water like a duck."

"How long ought this weather to last?"

"No one kin tell. It might last all the way to the island."

After awhile Jimmy went down into the cabin and made a hunt for revolver cartridges.

He found two boxes full in the captain's room.

He reloaded the Colt, then hid it with the cartridges in what he regarded as a safe spot.

He didn't want the sailor to get it into his hands.

When noon came the derelict was able to eat a regular meal, which showed that he was coming around fast.

The boys had given up hope of persuading him to turn the bark.

They knew he wouldn't do it, and the sailor knew he was boss of the ranch.

During the afternoon the wind changed.

He went to the wheel, and under his directions the boys worked the yards around one at a time to meet the wind so that the brig could still hold her course west by southwest.

Had the yards not been touched, and only the wheel moved to accommodate her to the wind, the brig would have run off almost due south.

The wind dropped some about sundown, but picked up later.

It wasn't necessary to start a rope to keep her on her course.

The sailor said that they would have to stand watch, since the wind was liable to veer around at any time.

He picked Jimmy to watch from eight till twelve, Will from midnight till four, and that he'd come on himself at the latter hour.

If there was any change in the weather he was to be aroused and told of it.

The binnacle lamp was lighted, and the boys were each given instructions how to hold the wheel during the watch.

As the steersman alone would be on duty, and he would have to leave his post to arouse his successor when the little clock from the panty announced the time his watch was out, the sailor rigged two ropes with nooses to hold the wheel for the time being.

When Jimmy was left alone at the wheel that evening, the sensation was decidedly new and queer.

It was the first time he had been on deck alone for any length of time, and the first time he attempted to steer the brig.

It was rather a weird feeling to have the vessel rushing forward under his inexperienced guidance.

The wheel pulled this way and that, and the compass card danced to the right and left in sympathy.

He couldn't keep the craft exactly on her course to save his life, but he did much better than might be expected of him, especially as time passed and the novelty of the job wore off.

The night was beautiful overhead, and as the wind held in one quarter, he got along without any great trouble.

When midnight drew near he attached the looped ropes, and found they steadied his grip.

As he had no great confidence in Will's ability to stand his "trick," he told that lad when he aroused him that he had better leave the wheel as it was, and hold it as steady as he could.

As Will wasn't any too wide awake at first, this advice was good, and Jimmy left him in charge of the brig.

Even at that Will found the job a difficult one, and he didn't feel happy to be the solitary watcher of the night.

As he was continually watching the clock for four to come around, time went unusually slow with him, for "a watched pot never boils."

But as there is an end to everything, four came at last, and with a sigh of relief Will rushed down into the cabin and awoke the sailor.

CHAPTER X.

PRESTO, CHANGE—NOW YOU SEE IT, NOW YOU DON'T.

Next day the boys steered the brig, in half-hour spells, under the sailor's eyes and instruction.

By the time sundown came around again they had become quite expert for new beginners, and could keep the brig on her course all right in the smart breeze that was forcing her on her way.

For a week conditions continued favorable, by which time the sailor roughly calculated they had covered 2,500 miles to the southwest.

Then the barometer, hanging in the passage, showed signs of a change in the weather.

The derelict called the attention of the boys to the dropping of the mercury.

"The weather looks all right," said Jimmy. "There are some more clouds, and the wind feels stronger, that's all I notice."

"The glass never lies," replied the sailor. "Things will be different inside of a few hours. There's a haze along the horizon, and it's likely from the smell of moisture in the air that we'll have rain soon, and with it is likely to come half a gale. You'll have the chance to find your sea legs at last. I reckon I'll have to do most of the steerin' while the blow lasts, for we can't afford to take no chances."

An hour later the clouds began to obscure the sky.

They appeared to gather right out of the firmament, and the brig ere long was enveloped in an impenetrable vapor.

The wind was now blowing hard, and the brig dashing along like a racehorse.

Jimmy was steering, with the sailor close by, watching the sails where they showed in and out of the mist.

The derelict's experienced eye could tell the moment the vessel fell away at all, and then he would call Jimmy's attention to the fact.

The water dashed against the brig with that peculiar sullen sighing which betokens a storm.

The brig no longer sailed freely, but tossed and dipped to the surges.

The sailor watched the glass frequently.

He judged that only an ordinary gale was to be apprehended, and that only a part of the sails need be reduced.

To take them in under the circumstances was no easy work, for he could only depend on Will's help, and he was only a boy.

The foretopsail yard was lowered far enough to enable the sailor to run aloft and clew up a single reef, which he accomplished in short order.

The maintopsail yard followed, and he took in a single reef in the sail.

Each in turn was lowered further, and another reef taken in them.

A third reef followed.

Then the sailor reefed the heavy mainsail and foresail.

Only a man with iron muscles could have handled the canvas in that wind.

He returned to the deck considerably done up and drank half a glassful of whisky.

It was now growing dark, and Jimmy, relieved from the wheel, cooked a pot of coffee, and they had supper standing.

We will not dwell on the next two days, during which the brig was at the mercy of a stiff gale.

She behaved handsomely, and made good progress on her way.

Then fine weather came again, much to the relief of the boys.

"We're getting to be regular sailors, Will," said Jimmy when they stood in the gallery on the morning after the gale blew out.

"I should say so. Look at my hands. They're hard and blistered. We've got our sea legs now, as the sailor calls it. Just think, we weren't sick at all."

"That's because we've been on the water so much in 'Frisco Bay, and often when it was mighty rough. I was sick once."

Will admitted that he was, too.

"It's fine to see the sun again," he said. "And this wind ain't more than an ordinary one."

"Breakfast is ready. Get busy now and help carry it into the cabin."

The temperature had grown considerably warmer, showing that they were well to the south, just as they knew they were a long distance to the west of the point whence they had started.

Inquiry of the sailor developed the opinion on his part that they were about fifteen degrees above the equator, which, if true, would place their position to the south of the Sandwich Islands, and about on a line with the southern part of Mexico.

It grew hotter day by day as they proceeded, and as the boys remembered from their geography that there was a group of islands directly south of Hawaii, though how far they did not know, they wondered if they would sight one of them.

Jimmy mentioned the fact to the sailor, and he said they would put in at the first land they raised on the horizon.

The derelict said he guessed they ought to sight an island in a week as, in his opinion, they were getting down close to the island they wanted to land at.

That was only guesswork on his part, for he had no more idea of the position of the brig, save that she was approaching the tropical line, than the boys.

For the next ten days the wind was light and baffling, and they made slow progress.

It was so hot that all hands went about in their under garments, with bare feet, and passed most of the time under a canvas awning the sailor rigged up to shield them from the direct rays of the sun.

The pantry provisions had given out, with the exception of the ham and a few other things, some time since, and they were living on stores procured from the lazaretta, of which there was quite a supply.

Three torrid weeks elapsed, and still they hadn't caught sight of land.

One afternoon, while the sailor was asleep in a corner, Jimmy drew out the uncompleted chart of the nameless island, and he and Will looked it over again, and figured if it was the island where the gold was supposed to be.

Finally they grew sleepy under the heat, and the chart slipped out of Jimmy's fingers.

A current of air created by the motion of the brig played with it, and wafted it, little by little, across the poop deck until it dropped down into the space where the wheel was, where there was no breeze, and it lay face upward in the hot sunshine.

It soon began to curl up into a roll.

Jimmy woke up from his cat-nap and felt thirsty.

As he got up he remembered the chart, and looked for it.

It wasn't in his pockets, so he looked around on the deck, but couldn't see it.

"Where in thunder did it go?" he asked himself.

Then the suspicion that the sailor had got up while he and Will were snoozing, seen the chart and taken possession of it, struck him.

He looked over at the sleeping derelict, but that individual appeared to be dead to the world.

"I don't believe he's got it," Jimmy said.

Then he felt the hot breeze sweeping his bare feet.

"Gracious! I guess it's blown overboard. That's too bad," he said.

He looked down on the after deck and saw the roll in the sun.

"There it is," he ejaculated.

He sprang down and grabbed it.

It was almost too hot to handle.

Jimmy carried it under the shade and unrolled it, intending to fold it as it was before, as it would lay better in his pocket.

While doing so he looked at the sketch.

A curious change had come over it.

Writing and marks in a reddish hued ink appeared where before had been blank space.

"What's all this?" cried the astonished boy, looking hard at the chart.

Across the middle of the island was written the word "Palmyra," evidently the name of the island.

Opposite the word longitude appeared 177 deg., 42 min. W.

Opposite the word latitude was 5 deg., 16 min. N.

Not far from the word "bluffs" was a circle marked "crater."

On bluff was a roughly drawn palm tree.

An index finger pointed to some writing, as follows:

"Stand under palm on bluff, face west in line with sinking sun, as lower edge touches far edge of crater; walk 36 paces straight, find four stakes, diamond shape, turn and face three cocoanuts on hill to north; walk 16 paces, find four more stakes, face sun, walk straight into crater, find four stakes, diamond shape, 1 yard apart; dig in center space; treasure chest 4 feet deep."

"Gee!" ejaculated Jimmy, "how did this writing get on this chart with the other marks? I'll swear they were not there before. Nobody could have made the change since we were looking at it a few minutes ago. Some people would say that the chart was bewitched, but of course it isn't. I must show it to Will. Hey, Will, Will, wake up and look here," he called out.

His companion was not so easily aroused.

Somebody else was, and that was the sailor.

He sat up and said, "What's the matter, matey?"

"Nothing," replied Jimmy, dropping the paper, for he didn't want the derelict to see it. "I was just calling to my friend."

The sailor stretched out his arms lazily and got up.

Jimmy stooped, recovered the chart and shoved it into his pocket.

Then he went down into the cabin and got a drink of boiled water.

An hour later he went to the galley to prepare supper, and there Will joined him.

He took the opportunity to tell his friend about the mysterious writing which had come out somehow on the chart.

"The name of the island is Palmyra, and the latitude and longitude is written in in the proper place where it was missing. The treasure is somewhere in a crater, and full directions are given for finding it."

"Let's see," said Will, excitedly.

"Look out and see where the sailor is."

Will looked and said he was on the poop, standing at the wheel looking off toward the horizon.

Jimmy then drew out the chart and handed it to his companion.

Will opened it eagerly and looked at it.

"Why, what are you talking about? There's no writing on it. It's just as it always was," he said.

"What!" cried Jimmy, snatching it and looking himself.

Will had spoken nothing more than the facts.

The name of the island, the latitude and longitude, the tree on the bluffs, the crater circle and all the writing had vanished completely.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" cried Jimmy, staring at it with open mouth.

CHAPTER XI.

LAND HO!

"What kind of game are you giving me?" grinned Will.

"Game! Why, I saw the writing here as plain as I see you," said Jimmy.

"You mean you dreamed you did."

"No, I didn't dream it. I haven't been asleep since I saw it."

Jimmy was thoroughly in earnest, and Will saw he was.

"If you saw it, it ought to be there now," said Will.

"That's what gets me. It isn't here now. I couldn't understand how it came to get there, and I'm just as puzzled to account for it disappearing again."

"Look at the back of it."

"There's nothing on the back."

"Hold it up against the sun."

Jimmy walked to the bulwark and did so, but that did no good.

"I'll give it up," he said, putting it back in his pocket. "Something brought that writing out, but it isn't there now."

The approach of the sailor put an end to their talk on the subject.

An hour afterward, while they were seated at the cabin over the remains of the evening meal, Jimmy, who had been thinking, suddenly said:

"I had a funny dream this afternoon, Jim," looking at the sailor.

"What was it, my hearty?" said the derelict, taking out his pipe and charging it with tobacco.

"I dreamed we had reached the island where the treasure is."

"What did it look like?" said the sailor, with a grin.

"Just like any island. It was surrounded by water."

"It wouldn't be an island if it wasn't, sonny."

"It had a couple of coves, a beach, a bluff——"

"Eh?" ejaculated the mariner, looking at Jimmy.

"A grove of bananas, some cocoanut trees, and the name was written on a big board stuck in the sand like an advertising sign."

"What was the name?" said the sailor, striking a match and raising it to the bowl of his pipe.

"Palmyra Island."

Blaine dropped the match and ripped out an oath.

"You've stolen that paper of mine," he cried, fiercely, feeling in his pocket.

"No, I haven't," replied the boy.

The sailor found the paper and looked it over suspiciously.

"You took it out of my pocket and looked at it."

"No, I didn't."

"How did you learn the name of the island, then?"

"Is that really the name?"

"Yes, it's the name. You couldn't have dreamed it."

"But I did, Jim. I saw the name and the island as plain as I see you now."

As the other things that the boy mentioned were not down on the paper, and the derelict knew they applied to the island, he was finally convinced that Jimmy had actually dreamed about the island.

"I once dreamed that I was aboard a brig with two boys about your size, and we was bound after a treasure," said the sailor, grimly. "The boys knew the name of the island, and when we put in at another island I warned them to say nothin' about it. One of them forgot the warnin' and told about the business. I found it out, and when we sailed ag'in the boy accidentally fell overboard and was lost. I hope that dream doesn't come out true."

He looked hard at Jimmy, got up and went on the poop.

The boys looked at each other rather solemnly.

"Why did you tell him that yarn?" asked Will. "Now you've got to look out."

"I wanted to test the name of the island I saw on the chart."

"You hit it all right. Gee, but he was mad."

"That proves I saw the writing, doesn't it?"

"Looks like it. Come, let's get the dishes out of the galley."

While they were washing the dishes and pans, Jimmy told Will how the chart got away from him and rolled out in the sun.

"When I picked it up it was curled up and hot as the dickens. When I smoothed it out I saw the writing in a reddish kind of ink."

Will suddenly gave a shout.

"I know! I know!" he cried, excitedly.

"What do you know?" asked Jimmy, looking at him.

"What brought out the writing."

"The dickens you do."

"The heat of the sun. The writing that doesn't show now is written in with invisible ink that only shows under a strong heat. That's a secret chart. What you see gives no clew to anything. What you don't see until it's brought out by heat is the secret part, showing where the treasure is and how to get it. Don't lose that chart for your life. I'll bet the sailor can't find the treasure to save his neck; but we'll be able to do it if we reach the island."

"Will, I take my hat off to you. You've got more brains than I gave you credit for. You have solved the mystery of the writing. Shake, old man."

"I'm afraid the secret won't do us much good, for the sailor is a stumbling block in our way."

"I'll tell you what we'll do. The sailor is going to put in at the first island with a port we strike to get the bearings of Palmyra Island. We'll give him the slip, hunt up some reliable skipper, show him the chart and make a deal with him. In this way we'll outwit Blaine."

"Oh, you will, will you, you infernal young swab!" roared the sailor, suddenly appearing in the door, near which he had been listening to the conversation of the boys, after creeping upon them unawares, for he had been suspicious of them ever since Jimmy handed him the dream story. "You'll outwit me, will you? You'll go overboard right now."

He sprang on Jimmy, and by main force yanked him out of the galley and began to drag him over to the side of the vessel.

The boy hadn't the ghost of a show to save himself, and he shouted for help.

Then for the first time in his life Will acted like a man.

He knew that unless he interfered his companion was doomed.

He seized a heavy frying-pan, rushed after the struggling pair, and brought the article down on Blaine's head with all his might.

The sailor dropped like a shot, stunned, on the deck.

"You're a brick, Will," cried Jimmy. "You saved my life."

"What are we going to do with him now? He'll come to presently and he'll murder both of us."

"I'll fix him," said Jimmy.

He got a rope and tied the sailor with it.

"Run into the pantry, light the lantern and fetch it here."

"What are you going to do?" said Will.

"You'll see. Hurry up."

In a few minutes Will fetched the lantern.

"Now help me drag him to the fore-castle."

They carried the sailor forward, and dumped him down the ladder.

Jimmy went down with the lantern, and Will followed.

They tied the sailor securely to a post, leaving his left arm free, but Jimmy saw to it that the knots were out of his reach.

Then they left their prisoner and closed the scuttle door on him.

"That settles him while we're aboard this vessel," said Jimmy. "He's as dangerous at liberty as a barrel of gun-powder near a bonfire."

The brig was sailing easily along over a rippling sea lighted up by a brilliant galaxy of stars that studded the heavens in all directions.

There was just enough wind to keep the sails drawing.

The wheel was tied so that she held her course as well as if a man was at the helm.

The boys stretched themselves out and talked about the changed situation.

It was like the first two days they were afloat by themselves.

"It's a good thing that you took Blaine's knife away from him," said Will; "otherwise he could have reached around and got it with his left hand, and then it wouldn't take the rascal long to get free."

"I thought of that; but in any case he couldn't have got out of the fore-castle. We've got the door caught on him."

"But when we take him his food in the morning——"

"When we do I shall have the revolver with me ready cocked. We can't take any chances with the fellow."

Even with Blaine under hatches and bound, the boys felt a fear of him, so they arranged to stand watches of two hours alternately during the night, and the one on duty was to carry the revolver and stand inside the galley where he could watch the fore-castle hatch.

It was along toward morning that Jimmy, who was on watch, suddenly noticed a peculiar sound in the air.

It came from the direction the brig was heading.

After listening to it awhile, during which time it grew louder, he rushed on the fore-castle deck to see if he could find out what caused it.

Right ahead he saw a dark blot against the brilliant horizon.

He thought it was a ship, but saw no lights, and as far as he could make out it was not moving.

Then the truth struck him that it was an island, and the brig was headed directly at it.

He ran into the cabin and aroused Will.

"There's land ahead," he said.

"Land!" cried Will.

"An island, and we're running straight on it. We must alter our course."

Jimmy took the lashings off the wheel and pulled it over.

There was so little wind that the vessel only responded sluggishly.

The sails flapped and she moved broadside on toward the dark object.

That wouldn't do, and Jimmy brought her back and turned her the other way, with a like result.

The boys soon realized that unless the yards could be braced around, the brig would not clear the island.

By this time the noise, which was the roll-call of a light surf on the beach and rocks, had grown very loud to them.

Then an idea struck Jimmy.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," he said. "We'll try and get the main yards around, and that might bring the vessel to."

The boys tried to carry this out, but being unfamiliar with the ropes in the dark, they could not pick out the right ones to let go and the others to haul on.

The result was the brig sailed on into a big cover and bumped her nose on the beach.

Then she swung around and came to rest as easy as though under the influence of guiding hands.

Without knowing it the boys had actually reached the treasure island.

CHAPTER XII.

TREASURE ISLAND.

"We're up against land at last," said Jimmy. "It's an island, of course, and it is probably inhabited. When morning comes we may look to see the natives flocking to the shore, and there isn't any doubt that they will pay us a visit. I hope they will prove friendly, and that there is a white settlement here, otherwise things are likely to go rough with us."

"It wouldn't be nice for us if the natives proved to be cannibals. We'd be killed and eaten," said Will, nervously.

"There are not so many cannibals now as there used to be before the English got hold of so many islands in these seas. Anyway, I think we're too far north to meet any of those people."

"Why, we must be close to the equator."

"We are, but the cannibals are south of the line, so I have read."

"The Fiji islanders used to be all cannibals, I've heard."

"I guess they were many years ago. The English have converted the larger part of them by the aid of missionaries and force of arms."

As it was close to morning, the boys did not sleep any more. Daylight finally came with tropical suddenness, disclosing a small island to their view.

It was a perfect mass of tropical verdure—an emerald set in the ocean.

There was very little if any surf inside the broad cove where the brig floated, and not a whole lot outside along the shore, for the sea was almost smooth and there was hardly any wind.

The tide was low, exposing a goodly stretch of white beach. When it began to flow it would carry the vessel right against the sand.

At present she was in about the middle of the cove.

With the next flood tide the brig, unless anchored or secured to the shore by a rope, was likely to float out of the cove.

The boys didn't know this.

Without help they did not expect to get away from the island.

"This is a fine little island," said Jimmy, and he and Will gazed upon the green mass with much pleasure. "I don't see any signs of inhabitants."

"Maybe there aren't any," replied Will.

"I hope there aren't any natives, but it would be much to our interest to find white people."

After awhile they went to breakfast, which they prepared and ate in the galley to save time.

"How about Blaine?" said Will, when they had finished.

"I'm not worrying about him. Let him go hungry for awhile. He can stand it. He's a big scoundrel, and would do us up if he got the chance. If the boat's crew he abandoned without food perished, as they had a good chance of doing owing to his treachery, he's guilty of wholesale murder. He ought to be punished for it."

"I wish we could get rid of him."

"I'm in favor of carrying him ashore and leaving him on the island."

"That would be all right if we were sure we could get away ourselves; but I don't see how we are going to get out of this cove."

The boys washed up the dishes and then returned to the poop.

The brig lay broadside on to the shore.

"Say, let's lower the sailboat and have a look at the island," suggested Will.

"Good scheme," replied Jimmy. "I guess there's enough wind for us to sail around the island, and we'll be able to find out if there is a settlement on it."

Lowering the boat was a picnic beside hoisting it, and they unlashd it and soon had it in the water.

"Who'd ever think that this little craft, built in 'Frisco, would get all the way over here, several thousand miles from Meiggs Wharf? I guess old Mitchell will never see it again."

"In which case our fathers will have to pay for it, I suppose."

"It isn't worth a great deal, but it's some loss to the old man who earned a part of his bread and butter from it. I've no doubt that long before this we have been given up for dead, and I feel sorry for our folks. We'll get the fatted calf when we turn up one of these days, the heroes of a string of adventures."

"If we do get back," said Will.

"Oh, we'll get back, don't you worry. After going through what we have in safety, the chances are all in our favor."

"Don't shout before you're out of the woods."

"All right. All we need to make a great success of our ocean voyage is to find the gold of the crater. I wish this was the island."

"Suppose it was, we're stuck here unless we put to sea in this sailboat, which would be too much of a fool trick to consider."

While talking, the boys had left the floating brig and were sailing slowly out of the cove.

Then Jimmy, who was steering, turned to the left, which happened to be toward the north, and they started to circumnavigate the island.

They saw trees in abundance, palms, cocoanuts and others. In about fifteen minutes they sighted a bluff with a single tree on top of it.

"Say, there's a bluff with what looks like a palm tree on it," said Jimmy. "That answers to the bluff in the chart."

"Get out your chart and let the sun bring out the secret writing," said Will. "Hand it to me."

Jimmy passed the paper over, and Will unfolded it and laid it down on the half deck, which was already hot enough to blister one's hands.

In a few moments the writing and other marks began to appear, and Will looked at them with great interest.

"The writing is coming out," he said to Jimmy.

It did not take long to bring the secret part of the chart into full view, and the boys looked it over.

By this time they had passed the bluffs.

Suddenly Jimmy gave a shout.

"There's three trees in a line yonder," he said. "They're on a hill to the north. Gee! Maybe this is the treasure island."

"Heavens! if it is we'll surely find the treasure, and then we'll be rich."

"We'll go around the island and see if there's anybody on it, then after dinner we'll go ashore and see if we can find the crater."

"No hurry about that, for the chart says the marks, that is, the stakes, must be looked for about sundown."

"We can look for the crater right away. If we see it we can hang around until sundown, and then follow the directions on the chart."

"All right," nodded Will, handing back the chart.

It took them two hours to go around the island in the light wind that was blowing, and they found a second cove on the side, which corresponded with the marking on the chart.

"If we have really hit the treasure island, it's the only case I ever heard of finding a needle in a haystack," said Jimmy.

"Ed call it a case of pig luck," replied Will.

"The whole of our cruise is a curious combination of luck when you size it up. We start off for a short sail on a sunny afternoon. A bottle comes floating toward us which we pick up. It contains the treasure chart, part of it written in a secret way. We run into a dense fog, float around till we run against the brig. We board her and she carries us off. Two days out we save a big rascal who we find is interested in the treasure. Only we were afraid of him, we might have found a way to return. When we're near to the island, if this island is the treasure one, which I feel sure it is, we discover the secret writing. Then we have a run-in with the sailor and

make him prisoner. That gives us the chance to hunt for the gold without being bossed around by him. Doesn't it look as if what teacher calls Fate started us on this adventure, and that we are going to find the treasure?"

Will admitted that things looked that way.

When they got back to the cove where the brig was they found her aground and hugging the edge of the beach.

They saw by certain marks which had disappeared that the tide had risen several feet.

"When the tide goes out she'll be left high and dry, and over on her side," said Will.

"If she's fast aground she will," returned Jimmy, "otherwise she'll float away from the beach."

"Do you think she'll float out of the cove in that case?"

"She might."

"If we're ashore looking for the treasure she'll get away from us."

"There's a chance of it. To prevent her from getting away we had better get her cable out, if we can, and tie it to one of those trees yonder. If it's too heavy for us to handle, we'll hunt up two long ropes and tie her to two trees."

As there was no rush from the present outlook, they went aboard and got their dinner, then they went to see how the sailor was getting on.

He was conscious and still tied.

He greeted them with a string of oaths and threats.

They paid no attention to his remarks, but offered him his dinner to eat with his free left hand.

He ate like a savage, hungry animal, and abused them between mouthfuls.

Finally he wanted to know if they were caught in a dead calm, for he had felt scarcely any motion for several hours.

"No, we've run foul of a small island which appears to be uninhabited, and as there's hardly any wind, we're at a standstill."

At the word island the sailor changed his tune.

He promised if they would release him to let bygones be bygones, and not harm either of them.

"You won't be able to clear the island without my help," he said. "If it should come on to blow the hooker would go ashore and that would be the end of her, and we'd be left marooned on the island, probably to starve."

"We can't trust you, Blaine," said Jimmy. "If Will hadn't come to my aid last evening you'd have thrown me overboard."

The sailor swore he only meant to frighten Jimmy, and had not intended to throw him overboard.

Jimmy wasn't to be hoodwinked.

He told the derelict he would have to remain where he was until they considered the question of releasing him.

Then they left him and started to look up one or two ropes strong enough to hold the brig to the shore.

They rigged the ropes to the anchor winch on the forecandle deck and carried the other ends ashore, where they made them fast to the bottom of a couple of stout trees, leaving plenty of slack so the vessel could ride at low water if the ebb tide carried her clear of the beach.

It was hot work, and the boys were covered with perspiration when they had finished the job.

"Now we'll start for the bluff and see if the crater is up there according to the chart," said Jimmy, after they had taken a good rest in the shade.

They pushed their way through the dense verdure, and in fifteen minutes came to a banana grove.

The ripening fruit attracted their attention, and they were soon filling up on it.

"This must be the banana grove mentioned in the chart," said Jimmy, pulling it out and looking at it.

The secret writing had disappeared as soon as the paper got cold again.

The words "banana grove" were written in ordinary ink, and remained.

Looking toward the bluff where they could see the top of the palm, the grove seemed to be in the position indicated on the chart.

"This is the treasure island, all right," said Jimmy. "We've found about everything except the crater, and I'd be willing to bet my shirt now that we'll see that when we reach the bluff."

They proceeded on their way over rising ground of a rocky character.

They had to go slow and rest frequently in the shade.

An hour from the time they left the beach they reached the top of the bluff near the palm trees.

Looking in the direction of the setting sun, they distinctly

saw a circular rim of rock, uneven in character, rising a short distance away.

"The crater!" shouted Will, in great glee.

Neither doubted now that they were on the treasure island.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER THE GOLD.

"Talk about luck," said Jimmy, "we're right in it."

"Bet your life we are. All we've got to do is to follow the directions, dig at the proper spot, and the chest of gold will be ours," said Will.

"Then will come the difficult part of the business—getting it to 'Frisco."

"That's right," said Will, his face falling. "We can't sail the brig back without help, and we certainly can't trust Blaine."

"Well, we won't worry over that yet. We have got to find the gold first."

"The sun is setting fast. As soon as its lower rim touches the edge of the crater we must walk forward straight 36 paces to where we should find four stakes driven into the ground in diamond shape. Then we are to face the three cocoanut trees and walk 16 paces in that direction. After that all we have to do is to walk forward into the crater, and there we will find four stakes a yard apart. In the center of them we are to dig four feet. Looks easy."

"Everything is easy when you know how to get around it."

The boys waited till the right moment came, then Jimmy started to measure off the 36 paces in the sun's face, Will following behind him.

"Thirty-one, two, three, four, five, six," cried Jimmy, stopping.

The four stakes were not there.

"Maybe I didn't take long enough steps," said Jimmy. "Look around and see if you can find them."

Will went slowly forward on his hands and knees, with his eyes on the ground, which, owing to its character, was bereft of vegetation.

After going a little over three feet, he called out: "Here they are."

Jimmy rushed forward and saw the tops of four pieces of wood, driven at angles corresponding to a diamond, even with the ground.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "Now for the next stage of the game."

He took longer strides this time and landed close to another set of stakes.

Then he walked straight for the crater.

It was broken away at that point, affording easy entrance.

As Jimmy stepped in, a native, naked, with the exception of a breech-cloth, sprang up and faced the two boys.

The encounter was a surprise to both.

The native commenced to jabber in an unknown tongue.

His attitude, however, appeared to be friendly, judging from the expression on his dark brown countenance.

"Who are you?" cried Jimmy.

"Me, Volo," replied the native, in a guttural tone. "You English, eh?"

"No, we're American."

"American? Same like English. Me understand your language."

"You live on this island," said Jimmy, in a tone that indicated he took the fact for granted.

"No, no, no!" cried the native, energetically. "No live here. Come ashore in heap big wind. Canoe upset. Me only save life."

"That so? How long you been on the island?"

"How long? No remember. Moon come two times."

"I guess he means about two months," said Will.

"Anybody else on this island?"

The native shook his head.

"Me alone. When you come?"

"This morning—sunrise."

"Where you ship?"

Jimmy pointed toward the cove.

"Maybe take Volo way to place where he get back to him island."

"Where is your island?"

The native pointed to the southwest.

"How far from here?"

"Long way. No able count. Volo much stupid. Him wish knew more—make medicine man then. Live fat. No work."

"What are you doing here in crater?"

"Come here cook bread fruit. Much hot like fire. Save strike light."

"I don't see any fire," said Jimmy, stepping forward and looking down into the abyss.

It wasn't fire, but hot gas which came up through the opening.

The fumes of the gas ascended from the crater and was breathed by Jimmy.

He uttered a cry as he felt his senses leaving him, staggered back, and would have fallen had not Will and the native seized his arms.

They dragged him back from the edge of the pit, and he fell forward on his face unconscious.

Will was greatly alarmed, but the native reassured him.

"Heat much bad when go too near. Me smell once. Fall down like him. By and by come to. No kill."

Will was glad to hear it.

The native explained that he brought bread fruit there every few days, stuck it on the end of a stick and held it over the hot gas, which he called invisible fire, until it was cooked, then carried it away to a small cave where he slept, and ate it.

In a short time Jimmy recovered his senses, and was conscious of no bad effects from the poisonous gas.

With some caution he looked around for the four stakes, buried a yard apart, in the form of a diamond, and found them.

"It will be dark in a few minutes," he said to Will. "The only thing we can do is to take note of this spot so we will know it again."

As there were other broken places in the rim of the crater, they piled up a heap of stuff that resembled pumice stone, and were ready to return to the brig.

They invited the native to accompany them.

On the way to the shore they told the native that they were the only persons on the vessel, except a sailor who was a very bad man and wanted to kill them.

They had tied him up in the hold.

They asked the native if he would help them sail the vessel to the nearest inhabited island where there were white people.

"Me do anything to get away from island," he answered.

They took him aboard the brig and treated him to a regular supper.

He appeared to be hugely delighted with the food.

He said he had lived on shell fish, bananas, bread fruit and cocoanuts.

From his looks he had not suffered any.

He sat with the boys for two hours on the poop, and they got to understand his disjointed English pretty well.

He was told to sleep in one of the bunks, and he acted as though he was not accustomed to such a princely luxury, but he didn't object to making use of the bunk, and in a short time was sound asleep.

Then the boys carried Blaine's supper to him, and they found the sailor in a villainous humor.

He wanted to be released at once, and as Jimmy declined to accede to his request, he swore he'd get free and then there would be something doing.

At breakfast next morning Jimmy told Volo that there was something buried in the crater that he and Will were going to dig for.

The native was curious to know what it was.

As they knew they couldn't prevent him from learning the truth if the chest of gold was really in the crater, they told him what they believed the contents of the box consisted of.

He promised to help them dig for it, and transfer it to the brig.

The boys found a shovel and a sharp piece of iron with which to loosen the top covering of pumice stone, and also provided themselves with three bags.

Before leaving the brig they gave the sailor his breakfast.

This time he was sullen and silent, but there was a wicked glint in his eyes which did not speak well for what was passing in his mind.

There was a strong wind that morning blowing off shore, and as most of the brig's sails were set, she strained hard at her mooring ropes, and the boys looked anxiously at the two trees, wondering if they would hold her.

"We ought to get out another rope," said Jimmy.

"There isn't any rope long enough to reach to another tree,"

said Will. "Those are the only trees near enough to be of use."

"I wish we could get the anchor down."

"We couldn't handle it to save our lives."

"Then we must try and get some of the sail off her. I don't think those trees are going to stand the strain."

"I've got a better idea."

"What is it?"

"The wind is blowing from fore to aft along the brig."

"Well?"

"It will be quicker for us, with the Indian's help, to slew the yards around so that they point toward the wind. That will take the force of it out of the canvas. See the idea?"

"Yes. We'll do that."

It took the three some time to work the yards on the two masts around, as they were far from being expert at such business, but they succeeded at last, and the strain on the two trees was greatly lessened.

The boys believed the brig would hold now, and after putting what they wanted into the sailboat, together with a good lunch, for they hardly expected to get back by midday, they pushed the boat to the beach with an oar, and driving the oar into the sand, tied the painter to it.

The two treasure hunters and their copper-skinned companion then started for the bluff.

Arriving at the palm, Jimmy proceeded to measure off the requisite number of paces in the direction he judged he had followed the previous afternoon, but he did not strike the stakes.

He and Will then started to hunt for them, but after closely examining quite a bit of the ground, they could not find them.

"Oh, what's the use wasting any more time. Let's go over to the crater? We are sure to find the four stakes there," said Jimmy.

They went, but were baffled again—they could not find the stakes.

"One would think those stakes had the power of disappearing like the writing on the chart," said Jimmy, impatiently.

"I'm afraid we'll have to give up till sundown. We can't find even the pile of stone we fixed up."

Jimmy tried to explain the trouble to Volo.

"Do you remember where we met you yesterday?" he asked.

The native pointed.

"Good. Take us there."

Volo guided them directly to the spot, and the first thing they saw was the pile of pumice stone.

Then they entered the crater and, after a short hunt, located the four stakes.

Jimmy handed the pointed iron to the native, and told him to loosen up the stuff within the stakes.

He set to work, while the boys sat in the shade and watched him.

"We'll soon know whether the treasure is there," said Jimmy.

"It's there, I'll bet a dollar," said Will, and Jimmy shared the same idea.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

After the native had loosened the surface up, Jimmy handed him the shovel and told him to dig.

Volo, having been accustomed all his life to a hot sun, did not find the labor as hard as the boys would.

He dug away for an hour and had made good progress when Jimmy took a hand at it.

He worked till he was tired, and handed the shovel to Will. When Will gave up, the native started in again.

By this time the hole was about three feet deep, and only a foot more remained to test the truth of the secret chart.

It was close to noon when Volo met with an obstruction.

"Something in hole," he said.

"Hurrah!" shouted Jimmy. "It's the chest."

A little more digging and scraping away of the loose pumice stone revealed a portion of the lid of a sea chest.

"Suppose there shouldn't be anything in it?" said Will.

"Do you think any one would take the trouble to bury a sea chest up here just for fun?"

"No; but the parties who buried the gold originally might have come after it later and taken it away. They wouldn't leave it here indefinitely."

Jimmy had to admit that there was a possibility of such a thing having taken place, in which event their hunt would end in keen disappointment.

"We'll soon find out whether it's been removed or not," he said.

"I'll have a fit if it has," said Will.

After clearing the top of the chest, and some inches around the sides, they saw that the cover was secured by a stout padlock.

"The gold is still there," said Jimmy. "If it had been taken away the chest wouldn't have been locked again. We'll stop to eat, and then finish the job."

They sat down under the shade cast by a grove of low trees and proceeded to eat dinner.

"Gee! It's blowing harder than when we left the brig," said Jimmy.

"Maybe not. We're higher up here and feel it more," said Will.

Looking over the island, they could see the trees bending over under the force of the wind, which was blowing a small gale.

At the same time the sky was clear and the sun almost as hot as ever.

They finished their dinner, and soon afterward the native resumed digging around the chest.

Finally about half of it was exposed and, taking the pointed iron, Jimmy inserted it under the heavy hasp, and the three using their united strength, broke it off.

The lid of the chest was then raised, and a piece of bunting was found covering its contents.

Jimmy pulled it off and shook it out to see what nationality it belonged to.

It proved to be of solid black cloth, ornamented with a rude skull and cross bones—a regular pirate ensign.

"Gee! It's a pirate flag!" cried the boy. "That shows this is a pirate's treasure."

Underneath the flag lay a suit of clothes, with a red sash.

Removing these, a cutlass, a fancy dagger, a pair of silver mounted pistols of out-of-date design, and a number of other articles lay on top of a folded piece of canvas.

Eager to reach the expected gold, the boys paid little attention to these curiosities, which were speedily thrown out.

The canvas formed the lining of what was below, and it was folded back.

Another piece of canvas lay underneath.

"We'll get to the treasure after awhile," said Jimmy.

Throwing the canvas aside, they saw numerous small, fat bags, tied at the mouth and showing a dab of sealing wax, stamped with a Spanish emblem.

This was evidently the gold, and the boys shouted with joy on finding it.

Jimmy yanked a bag out with some trouble, for they were closely packed, and held it up.

The impress of coins could be seen through the stout cloth.

"Cut it open," said Will.

"No," said Jimmy, "not till we get the stuff aboard. It's sure money. Anybody can see that."

Will took the bag and weighed it.

"It's heavy, isn't it? We won't be able to carry more than four of these apiece. It will take several trips to get it to the shore."

"We'll carry it all over to the palm tree first and pile it up there."

Twelve bags were taken out, and each taking four, the procession started for the tree.

Leaving them under the tree, they went back and carried the remaining twelve in sight.

When they returned to the chest, Jimmy tossed out another piece of canvas, expecting to find more bags underneath, but was disappointed.

There was nothing but a lot of clothes.

The twenty bags constituted the whole of the treasure.

"I wonder how much it amounts to?" said Will.

"When we get aboard we'll count it. Pick up those pistols and the cutlass. I'll take this dagger, the sewing-kit, and the red cap. You, Volo, fetch the clothes with the sash," said Jimmy.

This stuff was carried to the foot of the palm.

"Now we'll carry a load of the gold to the cove, and then come back for the rest," said Jimmy.

At that moment Will uttered a cry of consternation.

"Look! Look! There goes the brig out to sea! She broke away. Now what are we going to do? This wind will carry her clean out of sight, and we'll never see her again," cried Will.

"Gee! that's tough!" cried Jimmy. "Hello! there's the sailor at the wheel trying to work her around. He made his escape from the forecabin. The brig might as well go after that. If Blaine ever saw this gold he'd want most of it."

"Maybe our sailboat is gone, too," said Will.

"We'd better go and see. I hope it's safe, though we can hardly venture to sea in such a small craft," said Jimmy.

The gold was abandoned for the time, and the party started for the cove.

They found the sailboat safe enough, for she presented little surface for the wind to play on, and though the tide was tugging at her, the oars to which she was tied were well imbedded in the sand.

Both trees to which the brig was attached had been torn up by the roots, and they were gone, two holes alone showing where they had been.

By this time the vessel was nearly a mile from the island, and rapidly widening the distance.

She would probably be out of sight before dark.

The boys felt that they were marooned on the treasure island, and would have to live on the same diet the native had subsisted on since he was wrecked there.

They stood watching the receding brig for some time, and then they returned to the bluff.

They brought the gold and other things to the cove, and wound up by getting the empty chest out and fetching that, too, as Jimmy said they needed it to keep the gold in.

On their last trip they could no longer see the brig from the top of the bluff, and they wondered how the sailor would get along all by himself.

They didn't worry about him, for his fate was a matter of indifference to them.

They sincerely hoped they never would see him again.

It blew hard all night.

The boys took refuge with Volo in the little cave in the center of the island, and their supper consisted of cooked bread fruit, not very palatable to them, cocoanut milk and bananas.

There was a strong breeze next morning, but this calmed down, till at sunset a dead calm prevailed.

Two weeks passed without incident, and then at sunset one day a smart looking steam yacht, flying the American flag, was discovered by Jimmy from the bluff coming toward the island from the west.

He rushed back to the cave and notified Will and Volo.

They accompanied him back to the bluff.

The yacht evidently intended stopping at the island for some reason, and the boys judged she would run into the second cove on the western side of the island.

They and Volo hurried over in that direction.

They reached the beach just as the yacht swung to her anchor in the cove.

Darkness fell and she blazed up with light.

The party waited for a boat to come ashore, but none came.

Growing impatient, Jimmy suggested that they go to the other cove, where their boat was, and sail around to the yacht.

"They'll take us aboard sure, and treat us to a first-class meal," he said.

Will's mouth watered.

"They must take the chest with the gold, too," he said.

"They'll do that when I tell the skipper what's in it."

Half an hour later the sailboat ran alongside the yacht, much to the surprise of the people on deck.

Jimmy and Will stepped aboard, leaving Volo in the boat.

They were received by the owner and his sailing-master.

The owner proved to be a California millionaire, returning from a lengthy cruise through the Orient.

The yacht had run short of fresh water, and she had put in at the island to renew her supply.

As soon as the boys stated that they were natives of San Francisco, and had been carried off from their State against their will, they were warmly welcomed, and assured of a safe return.

Dinner being ready, they were invited to partake of it, and Volo was sent forward to eat with the crew.

It was a wonderful story that Jimmy told at the dinner-table after he had satisfied his hunger with the good things served up.

He omitted the facts about the treasure till later, when he took the owner privately into his confidence.

That gentleman was very much astonished to learn that the boys had unearthed a pirate's treasure of considerable value.

He promised to take it aboard after the yacht had got in the water.

The boys and Volo passed the night aboard the yacht.

The necessary water was brought aboard during the next forenoon, and then the yacht changed her anchorage to the other cove, where the chest was taken on and stowed in a safe place.

Jimmy asked the owner if it would be too much trouble for him to carry Volo to his island, as he didn't want to be taken to California.

On interrogating the native, the name of his island was ascertained by the sailing-master.

The chart showed that it was something over 100 miles to the southwest.

The owner agreed to run there and land him.

This was done to the native's great satisfaction.

On parting with him, Jimmy gave him one of the bags of gold, estimated to contain \$10,000, as a reward for his services, and this made him rich for the rest of his life.

The yacht was then headed for San Francisco, and passed the Golden Gate a week later, after a fast and pleasant trip.

The boys and the chest of gold were landed.

When they turned up at their homes they were welcomed as from the grave, for they had long since been given up for dead.

Naturally, there was high jinks at both houses, and all the neighbors came to see the boys who had been carried off thousands of miles in an abandoned brig.

The pirate treasure excited the most intense interest.

It proved to foot up nearly \$250,000.

Of course, the newspapers got wind of everything, interviewed the boys, and printed a graphic story of their adventures.

Jimmy and Will learned that the boat's complement of officers and men deserted by Jim Blaine in so heartless a way, had been saved on the day following his dastardly act, and had been brought to San Francisco.

Blaine and the brig were never heard of again, and the inference was both had gone to the bottom—a fitting fate for the rascal himself.

The golden treasure of the crater was deposited in a big bank and invested afterward for the benefit of the lads by their fathers.

To-day both of them are capitalists in San Francisco and sport the gray hairs of fifty-six or seven years.

Hanging in Jimmy's handsome home on Pacific avenue is a framed design that he values as his choicest possession—it is the secret chart.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BOY BEHIND THE DEALS; OR, THE LUCK OF A WALL STREET BROKER."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

After years of experimenting, a young Florentine chemist named Guido Fei claims to have discovered a flameless powder which causes no erosion of the tubes of even the largest cannon. He says it is superior in carrying power to any other powder. In an experiment in the presence of scientists and representatives of the army in a room which had been completely darkened Fei fired a revolver loaded with his powder and there was not the slightest flash.

Extension of the parcel post rates to seeds, cuttings, bulbs, roots and all kinds of plants became effective recently as the result of an order issued by Postmaster-General Burleson. Under the law just enacted parcels weighing four ounces or less are subject to postage at the flat rate of one cent for each ounce or fraction thereof, regardless of distance. On parcels exceeding four ounces in weight the pound rates applicable to the respective zone apply.

Blue Ridge Springs, Va., has been thrown into excitement as the result of the unearthing of what is said to be the skeleton of a huge mastodon. The discovery was made near Blue Ridge Springs by S. D. Taliaferro, of Salem, Va., superintendent of a crushing plant, and the skeleton will be offered to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington. The skeleton measures thirty feet in length, with jaws four feet in width, ribs six inches wide, teeth five inches in width, and tusks five feet in length. The find was twenty feet below the surface.

Failure to pass the February examinations has caused the dismissal of forty-six students from Princeton University. This is the smallest number, save in 1910, in ten years. The average is sixty-three. Eleven students were dropped from the freshman class, twenty-five from the sophomore, three from the junior and three from the senior. This term the faculty has set in operation a plan whereby the first-year men get a series of three uniform tests during the term. Students failing in eight hours' work as the result of the tests are placed on probation and barred from further participation in extra-curriculum activity until a subsequent report shows their record in current work to be clean. Persistent neglect of study is followed by dismissal.

After wandering thirty-six hours in big sewer mains under the streets of Steubenville, Ohio, recently, unable to make his cries for help heard, Steve Hobolo, 23 years old, an employee at the Carnegie steel plant, was rescued insane. It is believed Hobolo crawled into a sewer entrance at the river bank, and was unable to find his way out. Passers-by finally heard faint noises under a manhole and pulled him out, nearly starved and raving. From the incoherent fragments of the man's ravings it is believed that he went in the mouth of the sewer simply in

a spirit of adventure, with an idea of exploring it a short distance and then returning. The first intimation that some one was in the sewer came at noon, when persons passing on Front street heard faint cries. At first they were unable to locate the source of the noise, but finally they were found to center at the manhole in the street. The cover was lifted off, and down in the murky depths was seen the form of a man. He was unable to help himself, and a fireman was lowered with a rope, by which Hobolo was hauled to the surface.

The new 27,000-ton battleship Texas, which has been preparing for commission at Newport News, Va., was turned over to the Navy Department at Norfolk March 12. She is a sister to the New York, now nearing completion at the navy yard, New York. The Texas at this time will be the most powerful vessel of the United States Navy in commission. She will join the North Atlantic Fleet and will first go to the navy yard, New York, for her finishing touches before joining the fleet. Captain A. W. Grant is the commanding officer and Commodore Stanford S. Moses is her executive officer. These officers have been at Newport News several weeks superintending the completing of the vessel. The Texas is the first to carry 14-inch rifles, ten of them being mounted in five electrically controlled turrets, on the main deck on the center line. Two of the turrets are located forward, the second being so elevated that the guns fire over the first, and three are located aft, with the center one so elevated that it can shoot over the top of the extreme after turret. That will give the Texas a fire of four big guns dead ahead and four dead astern. All ten can be fired on either broadside. Besides these guns there are twenty-five 5-inch rapid fire rifles to protect the vessel from attacks by torpedo-boats. She carries the heaviest armor of any battleship of the active list in the Navy to date, her hull being protected by a waterline belt twelve inches thick amidships and tapering to six inches fore and aft. Above that, amidships, is a belt of armor ten inches thick, while a belt eight inches in thickness mounts that, extending to the main deck. From the main deck to the protective deck, fore and aft and running entirely across the vessel and enclosing all the vital parts, are two armor bulkheads fourteen inches in thickness. These bulkheads join the heavy armor on the outside of the hull above the protective deck and are designed to prevent shells from sweeping into the dynamo and boiler and engine spaces. The Texas has twin screws and a speed of twenty-one knots. Her high speed trial was in excess of twenty-two knots. Her length is 573 feet over all. She has a breadth of ninety-five feet and a draught of twenty-nine feet. Her coal bunkers have a capacity of 3,000 tons, giving her a cruising radius of 5,000 miles without replenishing her bunkers. Her boilers are combination coal and oil burners and oil is carried in tanks in the double bottom. Her indicated horsepower is 28,100.

CHEEK AND CHANCE

—OR—

TRAVELING ON HIS WITS

By ED. KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVII (Continued).

After the show Andy took the public thoroughfare back to the hotel. But Smith did not trouble him. As he got to the hotel door, however, a man in a dark coat and slouch hat made him a signal with his hand.

It was Jason.

A few moments later Andy was in his room, and Jason was with him.

"You saw Smith?" asked Jason.

"I did," replied Andy.

"He kept his distance. I was right behind you all the way from the theater. He won't try any gum game while I am about."

"You are a good protector," said Andy. "It is kind of you to take such an interest in me."

"I owe you more than that, my boy. Somehow I feel quite safe here in Portland. It is very close in this room. Let us walk down into the lobby. I am not afraid of being spotted."

"All right," agreed Andy, with alacrity.

So they left the room and strolled along the corridor of the hotel to the stairs. The lobby could be seen below, filled with men smoking and talking.

Down the stairs they went.

"I want to tell you, Andy," said the ex-convict, "of a queer dream I had last night."

"Ah?" exclaimed Andy.

"Have you faith in the verification of dreams?"

"I have often recognized presentiment in them."

"Well, it was very odd. You know the man whom I killed in self-defense went by the name of Jim Prime?"

"Yes."

"He was a tall man, with dark whiskers and peculiar black eyes, heavily underlined—well, I dreamed that he came to my bedside and spoke to me."

Andy gave a start.

"That was peculiar," he said.

"Was it not? He said as plainly as I now say it to you: 'Jason Bent, you are not my murderer. You have suffered long enough. You shall go free.'"

Andy was impressed with Bent's earnestness. He was about to speak, when suddenly, directly before them, a man crossed the lobby. He was not ten feet distant, and glanced at Andy and Jason.

He gave an almost imperceptible start, but kept on. Jason, however, stopped with a gasp, and his eyes seemed leaping from their sockets.

"Oh, heavens! Is it a ghost?" he half whispered. "Jim Prime! It is you! You know me and you are alive—alive, thank heavens, and I'm a free man!"

The last words rang through the place and caught the ears of everyone. Then Andy threw an arm about Jason, who sank to the floor unconscious.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NELLIE'S FUTURE PLANNED.

In an instant a crowd surrounded Andy and the unconscious man. A physician who chanced to be present bent down and felt Jason's pulse.

"Just an overtax of the nerves," he said. "Bring me some water. He will be himself again in a moment."

Andy was in a whirl of doubt and terror. He remembered the fatal words of his friend and trembled lest some one in the throng might have understood them.

But he saw in the solicitous faces about him no evidence of recognition. He embraced the first opportunity to say:

"He is my friend. Let him be carried to my room. I will care for him."

The stout arms of the porter and his mate carried Jason upstairs. He was placed on Andy's bed. Then only did the latter feel safe.

He wiped the cold perspiration from his brow, and muttered:

"Whew! What came over Jason then? Did he really see Jim Prime, or was it the result of overtaxed imagination?"

Jason was soon ready to answer this question. He opened his eyes and glared about him. Then he started up, asking huskily:

"Where is he?"

"Who?" asked Andy.

"Jim Prime?"

"You are the victim of an hallucination."

"No, I swear it. I saw him. He saw me and knew me, Jim Prime lived, and now he is keeping dark, that I may be hanged for his murder. Oh, I tell you he is dark and vengeful."

"Wait till you are stronger," said Andy. "Then we'll talk it over."

With a deep breath Jason lay back and dropped into slumber. When he awoke he was calmer.

"Andy," he said, "I have another mission now. I am not a murderer. I shall track Jim Prime down and force him to clear me. Then, you and I can be friends and partners for life."

"For life!" said Andy, earnestly.

"I don't fear the law now. I don't fear the detectives. I will fool them all," went on Jason.

"Well, keep quiet until morning," said Andy. "This is your room until then. I will go to my room now and to sleep."

This Andy proceeded to do. The next morning he went to Jason's room to call him, but it was empty. On the dressing case was a note:

"DEAR ANDY:

"Gone to find Jim Prime. You shall hear from me later.

"Yours, JASON."

This was all. Jason did not put in an appearance that day. The company played to a matinee, and Andy told Nellie all about the incidents of the night before.

"I hope he finds that man," declared Nellie. "He is a mean wretch to play such a trick upon him."

The company left Portland the next day. From town to town they went through Maine. Then they jumped into Canada, and Manager Potts even thought of a Western trip.

All this while nothing had been seen or heard of Jason or Darius Smith. Two months had passed.

Spring had begun to loom up as a near possibility. It was the first of March. Already Andy was considering the best plan for digging up the buried treasure in the Maine woods.

With great thrift Nellie had saved up the better part of her salary. Andy was a few hundred to the good.

Mrs. Potts, the manager's wife and matron of the company, was a woman of rare gifts. She had taken a great fancy to Nellie.

"You shall take the place of my dear dead daughter," she said warmly. "Little Nellie, you shall call me your good mother. I will take you abroad and make a lady of you."

At first Nellie shyly kept her distance from her would-be patroness. But by degrees Mrs. Potts won the young girl's heart and confidence.

Nellie grew to love the manager's wife, and the latter was happy only when Nellie was in her presence.

She learned by careful questioning the little romance between Nellie and Andy. It interested her intensely and at once claimed her sympathies.

She managed to call Andy and Nellie together to her room one evening. Then with rare tact and discretion she brought the matter up.

Of course, both of the young people were intensely reserved, but in some wonderful manner, with her personal magnetism, Mrs. Potts broke over this.

"I have a fine proposition to make to you both," she said, finally, "and I know that you will think it right after you have heard it. You are both too young to marry."

"We have not thought of it," protested Andy, with crimson face.

"No, indeed!" chimed in Nellie.

"Nonsense, you young rogues. You are just as much in love as two young people can be. Now, Andy, I want you to let me take charge of Nellie until she is old enough to marry. She will not make you the right sort of wife yet. She has much to learn and much to develop. Her schooling must be perfected.

"I understand that you have fallen heir to quite a large sum of money. Very good. You will want your wife fit to adorn good society. Leave her with me. I will be a mother and adviser to her. She shall have a good home and never more be compelled to wander about the world."

Andy and Nellie exchanged glances. Both knew that Mrs. Potts was to be trusted. Andy saw that no brighter chance could be afforded Nellie. He took her hand.

"I consent, Mrs. Potts," he said. "I can see that Nellie should have a chance to see the world. It is possible she may see others——"

"Andy!" protested Nellie.

Mrs. Potts laughed merrily.

"Don't you fear that, young man. Mr. Potts is going abroad in two weeks to look for new plays. He will return next autumn, but I shall stay abroad two years. At the expiration of two years I will bring Nellie back to you safe and sound."

So the compact was made. Of course, parting was painful, but Andy and Nellie looked into the future and saw that it was for the best.

A European steamer sailing from Portland took the party away, Nellie with them. Andy watched the vessel out of sight. Then he turned away. Once more he was dependent upon cheek and chance for his fortune.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANDY STRIKES A NEW JOB.

For some while after Nellie's departure Andy was exceedingly lonely. He kept up a brave heart, but he could not help feeling that the great ocean lay between them.

However, exciting incidents soon developed, which so absorbed him that the keen edge of lonesomeness was in a measure dulled.

The theatrical season was over. He had heard nothing from Jason, nor from Darius Smith.

The spring had opened with a rush, and warm weather seemed near at hand. Andy was decided to at once proceed to the woods and recover the buried treasure.

But somehow he could not seem to settle upon any plan for so doing. To be sure he knew the location of the treasure, but now that the time had come it was not so easy to think of going there alone and unaided.

But Andy could think of no one who would be safe as an assistant, with possibly the exception of Jason. And so far as he knew, that trusty fellow was nowhere within call.

Jason had departed to overtake Jim Prime, who had been supposed dead for so long. Of course he would hear from him again some time, but Andy hardly felt warranted in waiting.

(To be continued)

FACTS WORTH READING

SHE SAVED THE PIG.

A fire drove four families from a frame tenement on Summit avenue, Garfield, N. J., the other afternoon. Among those who fled to the street was Mrs. Alexander Toth. As she stood in the street watching the flames lick the paint off the clapboards, the squeals of her pet pig reminded her that she had left him behind. Mrs. Toth bowled several firemen out of her way and dashed back into the house and up the stairs. She emerged a few minutes later, with her eyelashes and eyebrows abbreviated and a badly frightened and slightly scorched porker in her arms. It was several minutes before she could soothe the pig. The fire burned the tenement to the ground, with a loss estimated at \$5,000.

WIRELESS 6,000 MILES.

Communication was held between the wireless station at Nauen, Germany, and one at Windhoek, Cape of Good Hope, South Africa.

The messages that passed were clear and distinct. The distance between Nauen and Windhoek is approximately 6,000 miles. At various times there have been reports of messages traveling 6,000 miles or more, but very few, if any, of these have been direct communications. March seems to be a favorable month for the making of long distance records. In March of last year the Naval Radio Station at Newport heard two wireless stations in the Argentine Republic exchanging messages, and these stations were said to have been from 7,000 to 8,000 miles distant.

Direct messages from Germany to this country have been sent frequently, and on February 11 the first through test of wireless communication between New York and Berlin was made.

PLEADS FOR SUNDAY BALL.

Judge Woolsey Hopkins, of Auburn, was one of the chief advocates of the Quick bill, giving local option on Sunday baseball in cities of the second and third classes, on which a hearing was held by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Judge Hopkins is the holder of a pew in the Presbyterian Church at Auburn. He is a son of the Dean of Auburn Theological Seminary and a brother of two clergymen. Also he is chairman of the committee in charge of golf at the Auburn Club.

"One Sunday last summer," he said, "while many friends and I were on the golf links hitting a small ball with a long stick there were other men in a field a short distance away hitting a larger ball with a larger stick—playing baseball. We were not molested, but the men on the ball grounds were arrested in blocks of fifteen. I was shocked at the injustice of it all and stopped Sunday golf at the club until the baseball arrests were stopped."

The Rev. O. R. Miller, superintendent of the State Civic League, was the principal speaker in opposition to the bill. Clergymen from Binghamton also protested against the measure.

990-FOOT ATLANTIC LINERS.

That the 900-foot transatlantic liner is a profitable investment is proved by the fact that this summer there will be three ships in service between Europe and America which will be over 900 feet in length. These will be the "Imperator," which, during the winter months, has been undergoing considerable modifications, the new "Aquitania" of the Cunard Line, which is due here next June, and the "Vaterland," of the Hamburg-American Line, which will make her maiden voyage to New York in the early summer. The "Aquitania" is 901 feet long, the "Imperator," 909 feet, and the "Vaterland," 940 feet, these being the lengths over all. In the same class should be mentioned the White Star liners "Olympic," now in service, and the "Britannic," which was recently launched and is being rapidly pushed to completion.

The "Aquitania" will be an enlarged "Mauretania," with a displacement about 50 per cent. greater. She will be driven by quadruple turbines working on four shafts, and her horse-power will be about the same as that of the "Mauretania;" although the speed, due to the great increase in displacement and the somewhat fuller lines of the hull, will be less. The "Mauretania" has crossed the Atlantic at an average speed of 26.01 knots, and it is expected that the "Aquitania" will be capable of a sustained sea speed of something over 23 knots. With her full equipment on board, the new ship will have a displacement of about 55,000 tons. With a length on deck of 901 feet, she has 97 feet of beam and a plated depth of 64 feet.

The safety elements in the "Aquitania" are broadly similar to those embodied in the "Lusitania" and "Mauretania." For five hundred feet of her length she consists of a shell within a shell, the coal bunkers being carried at the sides of the ship in the wake of the boiler rooms. The inner wall of the bunkers is about 15 feet from the outer shell, and the whole of the boiler and engine spaces is subdivided by six bulkheads extending from side to side. These bulkheads have been specially stiffened; and with them is associated a watertight deck in the neighborhood of the water line. An interesting fact is that the ship will carry two 40-foot and two 30-foot motor lifeboats, which, in case of emergency, will suffice to tow all the other boats, including twenty-five large rowing boats and a large number of the collapsible type.

The "Vaterland," an enlarged "Imperator," is 940 feet long with 100 feet of beam and a plated depth of 73½ feet. She will differ from the "Imperator" in underwater form, being constructed with a cruiser stern and will carry a balanced rudder operated by steering gear which will be entirely below the water line. She will probably be a knot or more faster than the "Imperator," and of four or five thousand tons greater displacement, this at full load being something over 60,000 tons. A sister ship of equal dimensions and beam is under construction at the Blohm & Voss yards, where the "Vaterland" is now receiving her finishing touches.

TEN-DAY ISLAND

OR,

THE SECRET OF OLD 33

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER VII (Continued).

The storm was passing. The rain had ceased, and the wind was going down.

Down on the shore were two stout boats turned bottom upward. As his eyes rested upon them, John Jacks made up his mind to begin his work then and there.

Susie came out and stood beside him; Joe was stirring up the fire inside.

"You had better not stand here," said Susie. "There may be some one watching the house. It would be a bad job for all of us if you are seen."

"I don't think there is anybody here," said John Jacks. "Anyhow, I'm taking chances. Susie, I'm going to ask you to lend me one of your boats?"

"To-morrow you shall have one, and welcome. Where do you propose to go?"

"That's just what I'm going to tell you. I'm going to Ten Day Island. Do you know where that is?"

"Why, of course. It lies right over there; but what in the world do you want to go to Ten Day Island for? It's a wretched place. There's no water on it, and the sea washes right over the island when there is a storm."

"You have been there, Susie?"

"Many a time. I go there right along. You don't understand my business, I guess."

"Oh, yes, I do. I see. They leave the cigars and the brandy on Ten Day Island and you go out and get them."

"That's it. You mustn't talk about those things, though."

"I'd die sooner than open my lips to any one. Susie, could we go to Ten Day Island with the sea as it is now?"

"Certainly we could. It is going down every minute. I have rowed out there many a worse night than this. But why do you want to go there? Do you expect some ship to take you off?"

"No; that's my secret, and I'm not going to tell it yet; but if you will go to the island with us you shall know all, and if what I believe is true, it will be the most profitable trip you ever made."

"What in the world can you mean?" cried Susie. "I'd just as soon go out to the island with you as not, but I want to understand why first."

"Suppose I were to tell you that there was money buried on the island, and that I know where it was buried? Would that induce you to go?"

"Captain Kidd's treasure," laughed Susie. "Is that your secret?"

"No," replied John Jacks; "it isn't my secret. It's the secret of Old 33."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SECRET OF OLD 33.

"Are we all ready? There is water enough in the keg to last us three days, if we are careful, and plenty of provisions for the same length of time in the basket. We have got the spades and the pickaxe, and I'm sure I don't know what more we want, John Jacks."

Susie Tyson was wild with enthusiasm.

John Jacks had not told her all, but he had told enough to make the plucky girl most anxious to go to Ten Day Island, and that was where they were bound now.

The boat had been dragged down to a little inlet, and Susie and Joe were already seated in it.

John Jacks pushed it off, and, jumping in, seized the oars and pulled out on the ocean.

The hunt for the buried treasure had begun, but as yet Joe had not the faintest idea where he was going, or why.

"What's it all about, Johnny?" he asked, as soon as they were well under way.

Now, there was no reason why John Jacks should not have told Joe all about it, except that it was just his way to keep things to himself.

But the time had come for talking, if he ever meant to, so John Jacks began by telling of his discovery that he was the grandson of Old 33.

"Well, it beats all!" cried Joe. "And you never knew it before?"

"Never dreamed of such a thing," replied John Jacks. "It came to me as a complete surprise. Now, listen, for I'm going to tell you the old man's secret. He wrote it all on this paper just as I have explained to you. I couldn't see to read it, even if I wanted to stop rowing, but I can remember it almost word for word."

"Do tell it, John Jacks!" exclaimed Susie. "I am just dying to know."

"When my grandfather was a young man business called him to Buenos Ayres," began John Jacks, "and he spent two years there. Just before he started to return to New

York by the way of Cadiz, in the ship *Seven Brothers*, a revolution broke out in the city of Buenos Ayres, and for several days and nights there was fierce fighting in the streets, and many buildings were set on fire and destroyed.

"Among others the bank of Buenos Ayres was burned, and the revolutionary leader carried off a large amount of money from its vaults in silver and gold. This he was supposed to use for the benefit of the new revolutionary government, but when he once found himself with so much money in his hands the president, as he called himself, aided by five others, carried the money on board a small brig in the harbor and started for France.

"The day they sailed was the day before the *Seven Brothers* made her start, and both ships ran into a fearful storm, which lasted several days. On the third day of the storm the *Seven Brothers* ran into the brig, which was a complete wreck, and making signals of distress.

"Of course at the time the captain of the *Seven Brothers* had no idea that the brig carried the runaway president and his stolen cash, but when he went to the rescue there the man was alone on the brig fearfully wounded and dying, with the other five who were with him all lying dead on the deck.

"My grandfather says that when he went on board the ship the deck looked like a slaughter-house, and that the president lived just long enough to tell them that he and his companions had quarreled about the treasure; a fierce fight followed, which had ended now in the death of all.

"The treasure was now taken on board the *Seven Brothers* and the brig abandoned. It brought bad luck with it to the ship, it would seem, for to cut the story short, the *Seven Brothers* was wrecked on Ten Day Island, and all hands perished except my grandfather and one sailor, who succeeded in reaching the shore.

"Here they remained for more than two weeks subsisting on the ship's provisions, for the hulk came ashore in the storm.

"They had no idea where they were, nor how long they might have to remain on the island, so they brought the kegs of gold and Spanish dollars ashore and buried them in a certain spot, which my grandfather has very carefully described in the paper.

"This was hardly accomplished when a fishing boat hove in sight, and they saw their chance to escape at last, and then the sailor, whose name my grandfather does not mention, suddenly turned on him, stabbed him near the heart, and buried him, still alive, in the sand."

"What a fearful crime!" cried Susie. "I suppose he did it so that he could have all the treasure for himself."

"That was it, of course," replied John Jacks. "He went ashore in the fishing boat with as much of the treasure about him as he could carry. His idea was to buy a sailboat and return and dig up the money, but like most sailors, he was rather too fond of the rum bottle, and as soon as he got to Wareton he went on a big drunk, keeping it up for many days.

"Meanwhile my grandfather managed to escape. When his senses returned and he found himself buried in the sand, he worked out and crawled down to the beach. The next he knew some men were bending over him. Another fishing boat had touched at Ten Day Island, and my grand-

father was taken to the home of one of the fishermen over on the mainland, where he lay very sick for many days.

"At last he was able to go about again, and the first thing he did was to go to Wareton, and there he ran into the drunken sailor first thing.

It was the worst thing that could possibly have happened to him, for my grandfather killed the sailor—drew a pistol and shot him. He was arrested, tried and sentenced to Wareton jail for life, and there he had been ever since until we managed to escape to-night. That's the story. That's the secret which Old 33 kept to himself for fifty long years."

CHAPTER IX.

JOHN JACKS MAKES A FIND.

"Is that Ten Day Island?"

John Jacks put the question after the longest and hardest row he had ever undertaken.

Morning had come long ago, and John Jacks was not rowing now, leaving the work to Joe, while he did the lookout act.

Far in the distance he could just see a few stunted trees against the horizon.

At first he thought that it was merely his imagination, but as they came nearer he saw that it must be land.

"That's Ten Day Island," replied Susie. "I wish you would let me row. I can make ever so much better time than Joe is making now."

"I don't like to see girls doing that kind of work when I'm around," grunted Joe. "As for my rowing, I guess it's all right. We are making bully good time."

"We shall soon be there now," said John Jacks, "and I'm ready to take my turn any time. How did the island come to get its singular name, Susie, do you know?"

"I've heard my father say that in old times they used to send the ten-day prisoners there. The island was bigger then, and there were buildings on it, and a good spring of water. Father told me once that more than half the island was washed away in a great storm which swept over this part of the coast long before he was born."

"It's very low, isn't it? Doesn't seem to be a foot above the level of the water."

"It's more than that," replied Susie, "but not much. You want to land on the upper side, Joe; there's a little cove there which is somewhat sheltered; on the lower side the waves roll in so that we could never get the boat up on the beach."

"Is there a big pine tree growing at the head of the cove?" asked John Jacks.

"Yes," replied Susie. "There are several big trees on the island, as you can see for yourself; but the biggest one is at the head of the cove. Does the paper mention that?"

"It does. That's to be my point of beginning. We have got to measure from there."

"Which way?" asked Susie, eagerly.

"West thirty feet is the first measurement, then we turn south and go twenty feet."

(To be continued)

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Profane parrots are kept in stock by a dealer in birds in New York city. He also advertises "a large variety of semi-religious parrots." The most profane bird in his collection he is willing to sell for two hundred dollars. He enthusiastically extols this bird's popularity by the declaration that "she's a corker!"

Recent soundings in the great African lake by Captain Jacobs, of the German Navy, showed a maximum depth of 4,190 feet. Still greater depths are reported to have been found by a Belgian official. Accordingly Tanganyika is, with the exception of Lake Baikal, the deepest body of fresh water in the world, and further investigations may prove it to be even deeper than Baikal. In the deepest places thus far found, its bottom is at least 1,600 feet below sea-level.

Pili nuts, which grow abundantly in the Philippines, have recently been shipped on a considerable scale to the United States. They are produced by trees of the genus *Canarium*, to which belongs the Java almond, are nearly triangular in cross-section, and contain a small oily kernel of almond-like flavor. Besides being very palatable in their natural state, they yield a valuable oil, resembling oil of almonds. According to an official report, the production of pili-oil is one of the coming industries of the Philippines, only awaiting the invention of a machine for cracking the nuts, which are very hard.

Charles Tenney Jackson, writer of fiction, and Frederick W. McKenzie, editor of *La Follette's Magazine*, have started for the Louisiana wild swamps to search for the treasure fabled to have been buried by the pirate Jean Lafitte. They are equipped with a "rude map," which, according to a story accredited to Jackson, he got in the wilds from an old moss picker to whom he had become greatly attached. Just before he died, the story goes, the old man gave the map to Jackson, assuring him that if he would follow the directions it contained he would surely find the Lafitte buried gold.

A company is about to be formed for the establishment of a fish-curing and sardine factory on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. It appears, says the *Jerusalem Journal*, the *Truth*, that for the last year or two great shoals of sardines have appeared in these waters, and it is thought that a remunerative industry could be formed if only a concession could be obtained for a long term of years at a uniform rate. Representations on the subject have already been made to the authorities. The inhabitants of Tiberias, who are extremely poor, would certainly be greatly benefited, adds the *Truth*, as the products would certainly be patronized by Jews and Christians alike, for besides possessing a superior flavor, the fact of their coming from the Sea of Galilee would facilitate the disposal of them even in western countries.

Jack and Bob were taken into the boat, and very soon they were safe on the deck of the English gunboat.

The course of that craft was then again changed, and she steamed swiftly away after the black pirate.

The shadows of the night fell swiftly. But on and on, like a Nemesis, on the trail of the ocean destroyers held the gunboat.

The night was not so dark but that the pirate craft could be seen at a considerable distance.

Gradually the gunboat crept upon her.

Meanwhile, it was now the pirate's turn to feel anxious.

Visions of the gibbet, which they so richly deserved, must have arisen before their eyes, as they saw the gunboat was slowly but steadily lessening the distance between them and herself.

Captain Flint finally called his officers around him on the quarter-deck.

"Men," said he, "we have got to come to a fight, after all. The night will not darken, as I hoped. There's only one chance for us. We must try the ruse that succeeded so well, when we were chased by the French cruiser a month ago."

"What! Do you mean to secretly board the gunboat, under cover of the smoke of the battle, as you did the French cruiser, and fix a train to the magazine and blow her up, as you did the Frenchman, while you make your own escape?" demanded the first mate.

"Yes. If my time has come, I've got to die, anyhow, and any fate is better than the gallows," replied the pirate, like a fatalist.

"Don't try it, cap. These Englishmen are shrewd fellows. They may have a close watch set on the magazine," urged the mate.

"My mind is made up. I will try it!" replied the pirate chief, decisively.

The gunboat came on steadily.

Soon she was within range, and then she opened fire on the pirate schooner. The latter had been cleared for action.

And the pirate's guns, in a broadside, answered the fire of the gunboat.

The latter drew nearer, and the roar of the great guns on both vessels soon became almost incessant.

The battle smoke hung thick in the night air, and the clouds drifted over the face of the moon.

Silently Captain Flint put off, in a small boat, from the side of the schooner away from the gunboat.

In his little boat the pirate carried a fuse and a cannister of powder.

Under cover of the smoke he rowed noiselessly for the gunboat.

The attention of all on that craft was exclusively given to the pirate schooner.

It was customary to employ boys in those days on war vessels to serve the gunners with powder.

There were several boys on board the gunboat to attend to this duty.

But Little Jack begged the captain to let him help the "powder monkeys" as the lads were called.

"I want to help capture the wretches who murdered my poor father," the brave boy said earnestly.

"And so you shall! You are a little hero!" cried the captain of the gunboat.

So Jack threw off his hat and coat, and removed his shoes, to gain the greatest freedom of movement and, barefooted and hatless, he began to bring up cannisters of powder from the magazine as they were needed by the gunner, to whose assistance he was assigned.

Jack had made his third trip to the magazine in the hold, and he was there alone getting out some powder, when all at once he heard a sound behind him.

He was in the deep shadows, and as he turned upon hearing the noise, he saw a man in the act of climbing through an open port window from the sea.

Jack's heart gave a great leap, as the light of a snipe's lantern, swinging at some distance on a beam, enabled him to see the face of the intruder.

At one glance Jack recognized him as Captain Flint, the terrible black pirate. The sea-wolf reached the floor under the window and Jack watched him breathlessly, not daring to stir.

He saw that the wretch carried a fuse and a cannister of powder.

Instantly the lad suspected the terrible purpose the pirate had in mind.

"He means to blow up the gunboat!" the lad said to himself.

Then his blood seemed to run cold in his veins, as he saw the pirate moving toward him.

Jack was at the door of the magazine. At that terrible moment the mind of the brave boy worked like lightning.

Scarcely a step had the wretch advanced when his gleaming eyes fell upon Jack.

Dropping his fuse and powder cannister, he drew a murderous-looking dagger, and he was in the very act of leaping at Little Jack, when the report of a pistol rang out.

Uttering a frightful yell, the pirate spun around and fell heavily on his back.

Jack still had Bob's pistol in his belt when Captain Flint saw him. Like a flash the boy had drawn the weapon and fired.

As the pirate fell, Jack cast aside his weapon and with a cannister of powder in each hand he bounded over the fallen wretch and dashed for the companionway.

Jack gained the deck in a moment and breathlessly told the captain all.

The latter and Jack with several of the crew went down into the hold. There they found Captain Flint, as he had fallen—stone dead.

And his boat was found fastened under the port window.

The sea fight did not last long after that. The guns of the English craft completely riddled the pirate's schooner, and she surrendered. The pirates who survived the battle were captured and afterwards tried and hanged.

For many years the seamen told the story of how Little Jack's death shot served to rid the seas of one of the most dreaded pirates of modern times.

In due time Jack safely reached his home in England, and in after years he became a distinguished officer in the British navy.

GOOD READING

A bumper crop of peaches is predicted in Georgia, according to advices received here from the peach belt. The orchards, it is reported, have not been affected by the severe cold and snow.

The Kaiser, who recently suppressed the tango, has sealed the doom of another modern fad by causing it to be known he strongly disapproves of women riding astride. Officers of crack regiments had been quietly notified that their wives are expected to use side saddles. Riding man-fashion has been growing among stylish women, who take daily canters in Tiergarten. Presumably the practice will now stop.

Two days each week a daily paper published at Eberswalde, a Prussian town near Berlin, is printed on only one side of the sheet, and on these days the paper is made twice as large as usual so that the public loses nothing in the way of reading matter. The object of this curious arrangement is to make the paper useful as well as instructive, as it can then be used for wrapping up provisions without any touch of printer's ink.

It cost William Meyers of River Road, New Providence, N. J., \$500 to be poetic a few days ago, when a sweet-faced little miss living in his neighborhood came to him as he was about to cut down a large elm in his yard and pleaded with him to let it stand. The words of "Woodman, Spare That Tree," flashed through Meyers's mind, and he threw his ax aside and assured his visitor that the tree henceforth would be regarded as a sacred thing. The other night Mr. Meyers was aroused by a report like that of a 12-inch gun, and then something struck the house that shook it from end to end. Going out to investigate, he found that the tree he had spared had fallen against the house, ripping out a bay window on the first floor. It will cost \$500 to repair the damage.

The second largest plant in the world for the manufacture of coke and coal by-products is to be constructed for the Lehigh Coke Company at Bethlehem, Pa., at a cost of \$4,000,000. It will supply fuel for the blast furnaces and foundries of the Bethlehem Steel Company, of which Charles M. Schwab is president. The plant will consist of 424 ovens, with a capacity for carbonizing 5,000 tons of bituminous coal daily. The ovens, built in two rows, will extend a quarter of a mile. The first two batteries of 212 ovens will be finished during the next 300 working days, and the completion of the others will follow within a similar period.

Experiments made by farmers of Osage City, Kan., demonstrate that Kafir corn in this country has deteriorated since its introduction in 1885. A local merchant imported some white Kafir seed from the American con-

sul at Capetown last winter, and in the spring distributed it among 126 farmers in the vicinity of Osage City, Kan. At a display recently it was demonstrated that the imported seed produced matured grain in from eighty-four to ninety-five days, while the old seed took from one hundred and fifteen to one hundred and thirty days. The new seed produced crops averaging a yield of thirty bushels to the acre, while the home-grown seed failed to produce a crop. The latter was unable to stand the drought. It is shown that the American Kafir has a tendency to take the entire season for growing, while the African grain matures speedily.

The Lundin non-capsizable lifeboat has been giving demonstrations of her worth recently off Sandy Hook lightship under the eyes of General George Uhler and eight members of the Board of Supervising Inspectors of Steam Vessels. The lifeboat proved that all the men who could be packed in it could not tip it over. The boat is equipped with wireless, carries a 24 horse-power Standard motor, which propels it at the rate of six knots an hour, and is fitted with a metal cover which is watertight. It was built by the Welin Marine Equipment Company of Long Island City. Captain A. P. Lundin, the inventor of the craft, had three models for the demonstration, 24, 28 and 30 feet long, of which only the largest size carries a motor. The 30 foot boat carried fifty men in its metal cabin, and with these men crowded on one side and seventeen more men hanging on the same side the boat only listed two inches. The 24 foot size carried forty persons comfortably and was easily rowed against the tide. The boats were dropped upside down into the water. They immediately righted themselves and the metal cover proved that it was watertight.

Many scientists have told us how clouds are made; most of the text-books on physical geography tell all about them; but it is all guesswork. Clouds are a mystery. It is true they are composed of moisture floating in the air; but how did the moisture get there? It is held that particles of moisture are evaporated from the earth's surface by the heat of the sun. This moisture does not form into clouds immediately. Indeed, the passage of the moisture from the earth to the upper air is quite invisible. It was formerly supposed that this moisture was condensed by the cold of the upper air into rain droplets which formed the clouds. But scientists hold that the tiny particles must have something to condense them. They used to tell us that the moisture collected upon dust particles to form into rain drops. Now they are practically agreed that it is something else, but they don't know what. Anyway, when these drops get large enough they accumulate into vapor, forming clouds. When the droplets get too large and heavy to float in the air they fall to earth in the form of rain, and this is about all we actually know about clouds.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

TOWED TO SEA BY A BIG FISH.

After waiting twelve years for a bite, Joseph Garlock caught a fish that towed him out to sea and cured him of wanting to fish. Garlock is a newsdealer of Bloomfield, N. J., and he fishes but one day a year. For twelve years he didn't get a nibble. The other day was his thirteenth try and the 13th day of the month. He hired a small boat and went out alone. He got a bite and hooked his fish. When he tried to haul it out, however, the fish began towing him to sea. Garlock tried to pull for the shore with the oars, but the fish was the stronger and kept going toward the ocean. Finally, Garlock became alarmed and cut the line in order to save himself and the boat. "It's my last fishing trip," he said when he landed; "but I'd sure like to know what that darned thing was."

MINER CARRIES \$80,000.

With \$80,000 in gold dust and bills concealed on his person, Leo Lindsey, gone for seven years, returned from Nome seeking Andy Anderson who had befriended him years ago. "I want to take him back North with me," he said to the hotel clerk. "When I was in trouble he helped me out and now I am going to try and return his kindness."

Anderson, who formerly conducted a restaurant, now is employed at N218 Howard street, and a bellboy was sent to pilot Lindsey to the place.

"Hello, Andy," he said, when he caught sight of Anderson, "I have come to take you and your family back to Alaska with me."

In the morning Lindsey was taken by Anderson to a store to purchase clothing more in keeping with his circumstances than the garb he wore on his arrival, and later he was escorted to a local bank, where he deposited his wealth. He had left the larger part of his currency in the strong box at the Coeur d'Alene, and inclined to be angry when the clerk who served him at the haberdashery refused to take gold dust in payment for his purchases.

"It passes current in Alaska, and I don't see why you can't take it here," he complained.

A GIANT AEROPLANE.

The London Times's St. Petersburg correspondent says that Sikorsky's giant biplane, Ilya Mouromets, makes flights daily over the metropolis and environs. It has flown for one and a half hours, carrying sixteen persons, and for two hours with the ordinary crew of eight. Seen from below it seems to ride the air without any of the roll or pitch that is noticeable in smaller machines.

The Ilya Mouromets is propelled by four Argus motors of 100 horse power each, placed on each side of the fuselage, two in front and two behind. It is asserted by the inventor that two of these motors could be put out of action without causing an accident.

While the aeroplane was flying over St. Petersburg recently one of the motors became frozen and stopped. The

speed of the aeroplane was diminished, but it continued on its course, and presently one of the crew was able to thaw out the motor and start it again.

Sikorsky intends to fit on a fifth 100 horse power motor and thus increase the speed.

The Ilya Mouromets has a wing area five times that of the ordinary Farnam biplane. The mental fuselage is 65 feet long and the forward part of the fuselage contains a number of cabins extending over a length of 28 feet. The cabins have large windows on both sides and also windows in the floor for observation and photographic purposes. At night the cabins are lighted by electricity. On the roof of the cabins there is a platform.

The total weight of the aeroplane is three and one-half tons. With a total development of 400 horse power the Ilya Mouromets can raise a total useful weight of a little over one ton, besides nearly eight hundredweight of fuel oil.

The mechanics can move about freely to attend to the motors and other parts of the machine without disturbing the equilibrium of the aeroplane while in flight.

VEST POCKET WIRELESS RECEIVER.

The value of the new French "ondophone" detector, for receiving wireless signals, lies in its very small size and compact make-up, so that the whole affair can be carried in the vest pocket. It is designed to meet the growing demand among the public for a device which will enable anyone to hear wireless time signals from the Eiffel Tower station. When it is once appreciated that the time signals can be taken without the use of a complicated device, and with little knowledge of electricity, there is no doubt that a much more general use will be made of the wireless time signal system. To show what can be done with the little detector, we may mention that at 20 miles from Paris, all that is needed is an open umbrella held as high as the arm can reach, while a small metal contact piece attached to a cord lies upon the ground and makes the earth connection. At 60 miles, one plants a knife in a tree, preferably a pine tree, or a gimlet will answer as well. One of the cords with its metal clip is joined to this "antenna," while the other clip is placed on the ground. The entire receiver weighs but 13 ounces, and yet, in spite of its small size, it is carefully made and is an apparatus of great precision. For long distances, to the extreme borders of France for instance, and even farther, one clip is joined to a telephone line which serves as an antenna, and the other goes to gas or water pipes for the ground. But within 120 miles, all that is needed for the antenna is a kitchen stove or range, balcony, metal bed and the like, and even a bicycle on the road makes a good antenna, or an automobile. The operator may use his body for the ground by attaching the metal clip to his finger, while the other clip goes to the telephone wire. In this way signals were received from Paris at a distance of 270 miles.